

Tomorrow *The Guardian EUROPE* offers the complete package including Saturday, the section which brings you book reviews, arts interviews and features for the weekend. Plus six pages of sport.

• European weather • Television and Radio • Crosswords • Cartoons • Britain's best columnists

Sketch

Jabs and jeers tax raging bull



Simon Hoggart

TREASURY Questions opened with the startling news, delivered by the Economic Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, that the Inland Revenue has opened a Museum of Taxation, to mark the 200th anniversary of the invention of income tax.

What a Christmas treat for the youngsters! Displays of early tax returns, the Tax Inspectors' Hall Of Fame, the actual black dress that Ann Mallalieu had disallowed — even though she bought it only for her work as a barrister!

And the gift shop at the exit should be fun for all the family. Joke mats disguised as "tax refund" cheques, "Final Demand" souvenir mugs, and "Soak the Rich" fruit preserves. "We squeezed them till the pips squeaked!"

Gordon Brown missed the announcement; he was attending his father's funeral. This gave everyone more time to concentrate on Geoffrey Robinson.

Poor Mr Robinson resembles an American convict on Death Row. The appeals may go on forever. He could die before he is put to death, so missing his last meal.

On Wednesday the Prime Minister conspicuously failed to offer him outright support. In the silky, almost feline way politicians say something nice about colleagues which nevertheless falls far short of what is required.

Yesterday Mr Robinson sat looking deeply glum, with his arms folded. He makes few appearances in the Commons, so when he does turn up, he is greeted with sarcastic "Ahs!" from the Tories.

He said he was pleased to announce that the windfall tax had raised £5.2 billion. "How much was your share?"

A gleam appeared in Mr Robinson's eye. He seemed energised by the jeering. "Why

are they against these measures, providing jobs for youngsters and training for youngsters?" he shouted.

Sensing a worrying fight back, the Tories switched into picador mode. The picador is the chap who attacks the bull with a barbed lance in order to drive it mad. The constant twisting and turning weakens the beast, so allowing the matador to pounce about later in comparative safety.

Nick St Aubyn wanted to know what help there would be for the middle-aged unemployed. "Will it extend to unexpectedly unemployed ministers?" Jabs.

Nigel Evans referred to Mr Robinson's curious means of publicising himself in the phone book. He inquired what advice he had for people out of work. "Should they advertise their services for hire in the Yellow Pages?" Ouch.

Andrew Robathan asked about the tax affairs of Stenbell Ltd. Surely this tangled web should be investigated by the Treasury? Yet Stenbell was owned by a treasury minister. The bull tried to look as if it didn't care.

Then the matador, Francis Maude, moved in for what was meant to be the kill. It could have been a scene from *Death In The Afternoon*, and I felt like Ernest Hemingway, thrilling to the mingled awe and admiration felt by aficionados of the corrida.

But Mr Maude is no El Cordobes. "The Prime Minister should abandon the search for a face-saving exit for the Paymaster-General and simply sack him." A limp response.

Stephen Fry, the Chief Secretary, was reduced to mumbling that Mr Robinson was "an effective minister; I look forward to working with him for months to come".

The fight had ended in a lame draw. Papa Hemingway would have been outraged.

Finally a weird intervention came from Anne McIntosh. She had come by a Euro note issued by a Belgian bank, which she said, looked very like a Marks & Spencer gift token. What was the Government doing to make sure the documents were not confused?

It sounded like the perfect way out for ministers. We could join monetary union, then if it didn't suit us, we could take the decision back.

Schröder takes aim at rebate

German leader defies British stance on eve of Vienna summit

Jan Traynor in Bonn, Martin Walker in Vienna and Michael White

GERHARD Schröder arrived in a Thatcher-like mood yesterday for the European summit in Vienna, demanding that Germany's budget contribution come down and risking a new British veto threat by insisting that Britain's £2 billion annual rebate be part of negotiations.

"All must be willing to shift on the issues, nobody can push through their maximum demand, and there cannot be any taboo subjects," the German chancellor told the Bundestag in Bonn before leaving for Austria. The days of Germany as the EU's paymaster were over and his country could turn its back on Europe if it did not get a new deal, he asserted.

Outlining his priorities for the German EU presidency, which starts in January, Mr Schröder signalled a sea-

change in Bonn's attitude towards the union and said his presidency would focus on budget reform and jobs pacts. Although he omitted a passage from his draft speech declaring: "We can't and won't solve Europe's problems with a German chequebook," the chancellor argued in some of his strongest language yet that Bonn's contributions to Brussels had to be cut.

Mr Schröder said he and Tony Blair had agreed a common position on EU tax policy. "It's about creating a fair tax competition... tax abuse and tax avoidance." He wanted "co-ordination" on direct taxation and "harmonisation" of indirect taxes.

The budget negotiations would be extremely difficult because members' interests were so divergent. "That's why it will be important to keep all issues in an overall package," he said. "There can be no taboos, from co-financing [of agriculture] to the British rebate." Stating that Germany's £2 billion net contribution to Brussels was 60 per cent of the net budget, he said there was "something rotten" about the EU bill.

Spain stands to be the biggest loser if Germany succeeds in scaling back its payments, and the Spanish press has been preparing its readers for "the battle of the Congress of Vienna".

But Britain now also faces difficulty, after stating repeatedly that the rebate won by Mrs Thatcher was "not open to negotiation". Britain had tried to outflank the issue, by proposing a budget freeze that would let the EU spend no more in 2006 than it did this year. Although Germany has backed the plan, Mr Schröder is now insisting that even within current spending, Germany's share must come down.

Downing Street sees the fight to save its rebate as a test of Mr Blair's virility. Britain would not be "steam-rollered", the Cabinet Office's enforcer, Dr Jack Cunningham, said last night.

Britain's backing for Germany's call to save the duty-free trade may have success, but is unlikely to deflect Mr Schröder from his main purpose. "I don't think it should become an ugly discussion. I think it is important that it is resolved on the basis of fairness," the Prime Minister said yesterday, in an interview with an Austrian newspaper. But he made it clear he would fight to keep the rebate.

"The reason for the British rebate is because of the way the Common Agricultural Policy works, and because even after the rebate Britain is one of the big net contributors," he said.

Pinochet's lawyers set pincer as they launch unprecedented bid to overturn law lords' extradition ruling

Legal plot takes on added twists

Jamie Wilson and Elizabeth Love in Santiago

THE Pinochet affair yesterday moved into uncharted legal territory when lawyers acting for the former Chilean dictator launched an unprecedented bid to overturn the law lords' ruling that he could be tried for human rights abuses.

The move came as the Spanish judge seeking the extradition of the general formally charged Pinochet with crimes against humanity and asked for a freeze of his assets worldwide.

Last night lawyers at the House of Lords were grappling with how to deal with the appeal, which was lodged at the judicial office. It is unprecedented in legal history for a House of Lords ruling to be challenged in this way and procedures for how to handle the appeal are having to be formulated.

Because the House of Lords is the highest court in the land, there is no higher court to which Pinochet's lawyers could appeal.

It was thought that the petition could be considered by either a panel of selected law lords or by a full committee.

Michael Caplan of Kingsley Napley, Pinochet's solicitors, said: "Having carefully considered all the recent developments, we can confirm we have lodged a petition with the House of Lords that the decision of their Lordships that Senator Pinochet does not have sovereign immunity should not be allowed to stand."

Mr Caplan added that they were still considering applying for judicial review of



An Amnesty International supporter takes part in an anti-Pinochet demonstration at the Home Office in London yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN APLES

Wednesday's decision by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to issue an authority to proceed in the case.

Mr Caplan declined to expand on the grounds cited in the petition, although these are believed to relate to allegations of bias or perceived bias against one of the law lords, Lord Hoffmann, who has links with Amnesty International.

In his ruling on Wednesday, Mr Straw explicitly dismissed representations by Pinochet's lawyers that there was any bias in the law lord's decision.

Amnesty last night said

that a letter sent to the law firm asking for donations towards the building of a new Amnesty HQ in London detailed Lord Hoffmann's links with Amnesty International. Kingsley Napley had donated £1,000 to the appeal.

"We are surprised that Kingsley Napley have left it until now to challenge Lord Hoffmann's involvement in the Pinochet case," a spokesman for Amnesty said last night.

The appeal to the House of Lords is not expected to affect today's bail hearing at Beaumarsh magistrates' court, in south London, where Pino-

chet is due to make his first public appearance since his arrest.

A date for a committal hearing, when a magistrate will rule on the Spanish extradition request, is expected to be set at today's hearing.

In Spain the 285-page criminal indictment, drafted by the campaigning judge Baltasar Garçon, charges the general with genocide, torture and terrorism. It accuses Pinochet of being responsible for the deaths or "disappearance" of more than 3,000 people during his 17 year rule.

The judge also issued a formal request for a freeze on

Pinochet's bank accounts and other assets worldwide. Court sources said the measure was taken to prevent Pinochet and his family from hiding funds that might be needed to pay fines or legal fees if the case goes to trial.

The political fall-out of Mr Straw's decision continued in Chile as the government played down statements by the military and called for a "united front" in efforts to bring Pinochet back and then calling the ruling in favour of extradition a "triumph for human rights."

Pinochet's detention is straining relations within Chile's governing centre-left alliance. Members of the larger Christian Democratic Party have accused Socialist party members of straddling the fence by supporting official efforts to bring Pinochet back and then calling the ruling in favour of extradition a "triumph for human rights."

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Review

Guerre closer to being magnifique

Michael Billington

Martin Guerre
West Yorkshire Playhouse

MUSICALS are not written. They are re-written. And it is hard to believe that the Martin Guerre now occupying this Leeds playhouse is the show that lumbered onto the stage of the Prince Edward 2½ years ago.

It is not, however, as in the story, an identity switch; it is simply hard graft by the creators, Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, and a totally re-conceived production by the dazzling Irish director, Conall Morrison.

The first thing to say is that the story now makes sense, starting on a 1580 battlefield with Martin and his friend, Arnaud, swearing undying love. We then flash back seven years to see Martin, after an unconsummated marriage, driven from the village of Artigat by the primitive locals. After his seeming death in battle, Arnaud arrives in Artigat to report the news but is ineluctably drawn into inheriting both the dead man's identity and his wife, Bertrande.

The rest, if not history, will be familiar to anyone who saw either the 1982 French movie or the American remake, *Sommersby*.

My original objection to the show was that it had no centre. Now the focus is clear, posing the Brechtian question of ownership. To whom does Bertrande rightfully belong: to Arnaud whom she loves, or to Martin who is still her legal husband?

The question of ownership recurs: the Artigat Catholics, and this is a strong anti-Catholic show, claim God as theirs, and in consequence persecute the local Protestants with zeal.

In all the changes, the show has acquired four new numbers, the most striking being *If You Still Love Me*, a big romantic number sung, surprisingly, by Martin and Arnaud and suggesting the show is really about male friendship and its betrayal.

Boublil and Schönberg have also followed the golden literary rule of "kill your darlings", axing *Working The Land*, the centrepiece of the original but thematically irrelevant.

Much of the credit for the turn-around belongs to the production team of Morrison, designer John Napier, choreographer David Bolger, and orchestrator William Brohn. Everything serves the narrative and the idea that we are watching a real community.

John Napier, in particular, comes up with a series of strong central images, including a massive cannon and a torture wheel, and creates the sense of Artigat through nothing more than vertical, sliding, mud-stained wooden boards.

The second half still offers one example too many of heroic self-sacrifice. But the show now has a palpable narrative urgency and there is a strong sense of an irresolvable emotional triangle between Martin, Arnaud, and Bertrande, from Matthew Canemelle as a wirily decent Arnaud, from Stephen Weller as the inextinguishable Martin, and from Joanna Riding as a Bertrande torn between rival claims.

Gareth Snook also makes a fierce impression as the local priest, bandier with the fall than the rosary.

Played by a nine-strong band and in front of a real audience rather than the usual London premier gang of 8 list celebrities, the show proves you can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear not by magic but by unrelenting toil.

£1bn hurricane lifeline

World Bank makes loan offer, but Paris Club fails to write off debts

Charlotte Denny in Paris

THE World Bank yesterday threw a lifeline to Honduras and Nicaragua offering \$1 billion (about £600 million) in concessional interest-free loans to help the region repair the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch.

However, the offer came after a separate meeting of creditor governments in Paris disappointed aid agencies by refusing to consider an immediate write-off of the countries' existing foreign debt. The Paris Club, which represents western governments owed money by third world countries, said it was granting Honduras and Nicaragua a three-year moratorium on repayments on their crippling foreign loans.

It said the decision would free up significant budgetary resources for the countries and help them to finance reconstruction. But the club

is not planning any extra debt release beyond what the countries are entitled to under existing international programmes.

Aid agencies said the Paris Club's decision, while a welcome breathing space, was a "stay of execution" rather than a solution to the region's debt burden.

"It still leaves the countries trapped in a debtor's prison," said Andrew Simms, of Christian Aid.

The agencies would like to see the \$10.4 billion the two countries owe to western governments and international lending bodies cancelled rather than rescheduled.

Announcing the World Bank decision at a meeting of international donors in Washington, the bank's president, James Wolfensohn, said: "The international community must continue to support the people and governments of central America in overcoming the challenges they now face."

The United Nations has estimated that the bill for rebuilding the countries will come to at least \$5 billion.

Honduras owes Paris Club countries just over \$1 billion, while Nicaragua owes more than \$1.5 billion.

In yesterday's statement the 20-member organisation offered to write off up to two-thirds of Honduras's debt once it agrees a programme of fiscal belt tightening with the International Monetary Fund.

Nicaragua will have up to 80 per cent of its debts forgiven under an existing World Bank programme for the most heavily indebted countries, but is unlikely to qualify for at least three years until it has completed its current IMF agreement.

Aid agencies said making debt cancellation conditional on sticking to the IMF's rigid prescriptions was a slap in the face for the two countries.

"To put that kind of burden on top of a country which has been destroyed is quite shocking," said Angela Travis of the Jubilee 2000 coalition, which is seeking to have unpayable third world debt cancelled by the millennium.

Oxfam said the World Bank's debt relief programme was insufficient to bring the two countries' debts down to a sustainable level even before the hurricane struck.

"An extraordinary situation prevails in Central America which requires extraordinary measures to address it; as it stands, creditors are proposing business as usual," said Tony Burden from Oxfam.

The agencies also criticised the IMF for increasing Honduras's debt burden by offering further loans to pay for rebuilding after the disaster. On Monday the fund announced it had agreed a \$55 million loan for Honduras at commercial interest rates.

Mr Simms said the move was a sign that the IMF was out of step with the other international lending bodies who have rushed in aid and concessional loans.

"The creditors need to use this breathing space to co-ordinate their approach. Over the next 12 months they should sit down and work out the full resources required for reconstruction and poverty reduction."

Transplant man regains touch

Jon Henley in Paris

THE world's first hand transplant recipient, Clint Hallam, said yesterday he was preparing to return home to Australia, having regained the sense of touch in his fingers three months after the groundbreaking operation at a Lyons hospital.

Mr Hallam, a New Zealand-born businessman, said he was convinced he would eventually gain full use of the transplant and thanked those "who helped me realise the dream I've had since 1989," when he lost his hand in a circular saw accident.

"The progress made is really quite staggering," he said. "Sensation is just starting to arrive in the fingertips. The strength within the muscles is still a little restricted, but it is certainly regaining the normal strength of my hand."

In the operation on September 25, an international team of doctors at

Edouard Herriot hospital in Lyons sewed the hand of an unidentified brain-dead man on to Mr Hallam's right arm. It was the first such operation attempted since the 1960s, when a hand transplant patient in Ecuador kept his new hand only two weeks.

Mr Hallam, aged 48, was released from hospital in mid-October and has since been convalescing and undergoing check-ups and therapy at the hospital once a week. His doctor, Jean-Michel Dubernard, said his body was adjusting well to the new hand and that he could return to Perth before or shortly after Christmas.

But the New Zealand-born businessman, who was serving a two-year prison sentence for fraud when he saw the accident happened, may yet have to face a judge after returning home. Australian papers have said he is to appear before a court in January on seven different charges of fraud in relation to a marketing investment scam.

JP's 100 1520

سكرا من الامن

Cancer: the high-risk diets and lifestyles

Cancer type/site	High risk foods	Foods that lessen risk	Other risks	Health enhancing
Colorectal	Red meat, processed meat	Vegetables, non-starch polysaccharides (fibre)	Obesity	Physical activity
Stomach	Alcohol, red meat, salt	Vegetables	Late adolescence, late marriage, obesity	Physical activity
Lung			Smoking, occupation	Physical activity
Prostate		Vitamin E		
Endometrium			Smoking	
Pancreas			Smoking	
Liver	Alcohol		Smoking, occupation	

Deaths from all cancers in England and Wales, 1996
Men: 72,464 Women: 66,995

What to do

- Do not smoke
- Take regular exercise
- Do not be sexually promiscuous
- Avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight
- Avoid hepatitis B and C risks

What to eat and drink

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (at least five portions a day)
- Eat plenty of cereal foods, mainly in an unprocessed form (as a source of non-starch polysaccharides)
- Maintain ideal body weight (body mass index 20-25), avoid fatty foods
- Eat red meat and processed meat in moderation (no more than 140g a day)
- Avoid high doses of vitamin supplements
- Alcohol in moderation (a maximum of two units a day for women and three units a day for men)
- Avoid highly salted and mouldy foods

BBC news decision prompts Scots rage

Gerard Seaman

THE BBC yesterday rejected proposals for a Scottish version of the Six O'Clock News in a move that infuriated nationalist politicians and the media establishment north of the border.

The board of governors announced it would not accept BBC Scotland's petition to produce its own Six O'Clock News, preferring instead to invest £10 million in the Scottish news operations.

Nationalist politicians described the move as arrogant. "This is the wrong decision for Scotland (BBC), which had lobbied hard for a Scottish Six," said it was deeply disappointed by the decision but believed that an hour-long news programme produced and edited in Scotland was inevitable — in time.

Lindsay Patterson, who resigned from the BCS when

friendly BBC ears about their opposition

The Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, was privately in favour of the idea, but yesterday he said the BBC must remain independent from political influence and called for improved standards in broadcasting in Scotland.

"Many people in Scotland will be disappointed by the decision that's been taken. It is vital that BBC Scotland raises its standards and offers proper independent coverage of the new Scottish parliament. It is important that we break away from the narrow concept of local news," he said.

The Broadcasting Council for Scotland (BCS), which had lobbied hard for a Scottish Six, said it was deeply disappointed by the decision but believed that an hour-long news programme produced and edited in Scotland was inevitable — in time.

Lindsay Patterson, who resigned from the BCS when

This decision is arrogant and flies in the face of the Scottish consensus

the governors said they were not minded to allow the Scottish Six to go ahead, said he was astonished at the intrusion of the governors and denied that there was anything new about the investment package.

Professor Patterson said the decision to opt out of the latter part of Newsnight effectively buried Scottish news in the dead of night when most viewers would be in bed.

The Scottish Conservative leader, David McLetchie, said he believed the BBC was making a grave mistake. A recent poll in the Glasgow-based Herald newspaper suggested that around two thirds of people in Scotland were in favour of a Scottish Six. Some campaigners have vowed to seek judicial review of the BBC's decision. But, in the meantime, London-based journalists will embark on training courses to bring them up to speed with events in Scotland and other parts of the UK.

Right diet may help prevent cancer

The British approach to food is causing major health problems, according to new research. Sarah Boseley reports

UP TO 80 per cent of all breast cancers and bowel cancers could be prevented if people improved their eating habits, according to scientists at Cambridge University.

John Cummings and colleagues at the Clinical Nutrition Centre believe that neither the public nor doctors take diet seriously enough. The British way of nourishment, with its emphasis on meat, processed food like sausages, and dearth of fruit and vegetables, is causing the nation's major health problems, they say, and may be the reason why cancer rates in the UK are far higher than they are in other places, such as the Mediterranean.

Their study, published in the British Medical Journal, looks at the biological evidence which suggests that cancers can be caused by the food we eat. In each type of cancer, there are other risk factors, such as smoking, obesity, infections, sexual behaviour and exposure to sunlight, but "food and drink has a part to play in many, if not all cancers, albeit to a variable extent."

In general, their message is that red and processed meat and alcohol increase the risk of cancer, while fruit, vegetables and fibre have a protective effect. They say there is no evidence that vitamin supplements help prevent cancer and advise people that cancer does not sometimes have hereditary causes.

In March this year, a row broke out when the Government's Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food (COMA) produced a report on diet and cancer. They were accused of making a U-turn in the British Medical Journal, which said the report was "a masterpiece of misdirection" when it recommended that anyone who eats more than 140 grammes (five ounces) of red meat a day — or 14 portions a

week — should consider cutting down.

Average meat-eaters need not change their habits, they advised, even though the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, had said six months earlier that they should. The World Cancer Research Fund at the same time said people should not eat more than 80 grammes (2.8 ounces) a day.

The Dunn scientists have kept their distance from arguments over the exact quantity that is safe, although they note that 15 per cent of consumers, mainly men, eat more meat than the Department of Health advises. But their research effectively strengthens the health message that changes in diet are needed.

"High consumption of meat, especially red meat and processed meat, is linked with higher risk of bowel, breast, prostate and pancreatic cancer," they say. "There is some evidence of an association with lung cancer, and of an association of barbecued meat and oesophageal cancer."

We should be eating far more fruit and vegetables, they say. "What is remarkable about the diet-cancer story is the consistency with

which certain foods emerge as important in reducing risk across the range of cancers. Vegetables and fruit are almost invariably protective for the major cancers.

"Consumption of these foods in Britain is less than half that in Mediterranean populations, where cancer rates are low. Average consumption of fruit and vegetables in Britain should at least double to five portions a day."

Consumption of fibre should

we could not afford to if and but too much," he said. "There is a feeling amongst medical people that this is not a serious way of preventing illness. Yet all the evidence points to diet being a major risk factor for cancer."

The British do not take their diet seriously, he feels. "I don't think people believe fundamentally that diet is important to health here. It is a long-term thing. If you stop smoking you get respiratory

found different dietary risks for different cancers, although the overall conclusions on meat and vegetables hold for them all. Fat in the diet has not been confirmed as a risk factor for breast cancer, but "both meat and alcohol are associated with increased risk."

The evidence is strongest in colorectal (bowel) cancer, they say. "People who report eating greater amounts of red and processed meat are at higher risk of colorectal cancer. Red meat is taken to mean beef, pork and lamb in main dishes, and processed meat includes sausages, ham-burgers, smoked cured and salted meat (including ham and bacon), and canned meat."

The authors conclude that a better diet would protect not only against cancer but also other diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. "Further, a plant-based food economy is much more sustainable than one based on livestock. Provided that other lifestyle factors are also taken into account, the diet for cancer prevention can, on the basis of current knowledge, form the basis for a rational public health policy."

Consumption of vegetables and fruit in Britain is less than half that in Mediterranean populations

increase from 12g a day to 18g a day, but with diet, changes take 20 to 40 to 50 years."

The poor British diet was a stark contrast with many other countries. "Mediterranean countries take less interest in a healthy diet than we do, but they already eat a pretty healthy one." Few people had changed their habits in the UK in spite of being told that fruit and vegetables are good for them. The study

improvements within a month, but with diet, changes take 20 to 40 to 50 years."

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Tory peers go behind Hague's back again over Euro voting bill

Even Maclellan, Chief Political Correspondent

TORY peers delivered a stomp to their party leader William Hague yesterday by going behind his back again to agree another secret deal with the Government.

Conservative leaders in the Lords made a pact with their Government counterparts to allow through the contentious European election bill, which was the subject of a Lords-Commons ping-pong battle last month.

The bill, which the Lords sent back to the Commons five times, is now scheduled to become law by the end of January in time for the European Parliament election in June, to be held for the first time under proportional representation.

As part of the deal, peers will receive an extended Christmas and New Year holiday. Instead of returning on Tuesday January 5, they will remain on holiday until Monday, January 11.

The deal, described by a Tory peer as a "chap's agreement", was supposed to remain secret. But the Prime Minister's official spokesman disclosed it at a Downing Street briefing for journalists yesterday morning.

He said Lord Carter, the Government Chief Whip in the Lords, had informed the Cabinet yesterday morning a timetable had been secured for the bill, which goes to the Lords on Tuesday.

Mr Hague earlier this month was bypassed by the Tory leadership in the Lords under Lord Cranborne, who was subsequently sacked.

Although Lord Strathclyde, the new Tory leader in the Lords, maintained that Mr Hague had been kept informed of the new deal, other Tory sources disputed this.

Under the closed list system of PR introduced in the bill, the parties will have huge powers of patronage, listing their preferred candidates.

Although the Tories will vote against the bill, they have crucially promised under the timetable agreement not to filibuster it.

The Government would be in trouble if there was a filibuster but can handle a lost vote by invoking the Parliament Act and get the bill on the Statute Book by late January. Agreement on the timetable was reached between the two parties' chief whips.

Lord Strathclyde last night wrote to Lord Carter, protesting at the agreement being made public and threatening to break off relations if there was any repetition.

Lord MacKay of Arbroath, the new Tory deputy leader in the Lords, confirmed that he had been in contact with the Government, saying: "We know what they're going to do and they know what we're going to do."

Trimble and Hume receive Nobels

continued from page 1

an optician. His lecture, though peppered with references to philosophers, was more nuts and bolts. He used the world stage to keep his own constituency in order, telling Sinn Féin that the IRA had to disarm.

Mr Trimble said: "In Ulster, what I have looked for is peace within the realms of the possible. We could only have started from where we actually were, not from where we would have liked to be."

"And we have started. And we will go on. And we will go on all the better if we walk rather than run. If we put aside fantasy and accept the flawed nature of human enterprises. Sometimes we will stumble. This need not matter."

The Ulster Unionist leader, aged 64, had put no pressure on the paramilitaries over how they decommission. All he wanted was a credible beginning, and it was not too much to ask that Mr Hume's SDLP support him in that.

"Common sense dictates that I cannot forever convince society that the real peace is at hand if there is not a beginning to the decommissioning of weapons," he said.

But, though the two laureates avoided direct contact, their families and guests began to mingle after the ceremony, in the foyer of the Grand Hotel. Daphne Trimble, aged 44, and Pat Hume, aged 60, giggled like old friends.

Both had been terrified as their husbands' big day dawned, and close to tears during the presentation.

Mr Hume's aunt, Bella Kerrigan, aged 79, from the Bogside in Derry, admitted she had cried. Trimble's son Nicholas, aged 11, confessed he had met Mr Hume on the plane to Oslo. "He is a very nice man. I liked him."

There was a telling moment in one interview. When the laureates were asked whether they were friends, there was a long pause, before Mr Trimble swallowed hard and forced: "We have a good working relationship."

There is one matter that unites them still. Neither has decided what to do with the \$200,000 prize money.

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Yet it is public knowledge that Iranian films are censored, and that the directors who get their films made have to tread a delicate, elliptical line. What is less well known is that the films emerging from Iran are the finest in the world.

Simon Hattenstone on Iran's youngest film director

Friday Review, page ii

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White paper aims to cut number of smokers by 1.5 million □ Ban on smoking in workplace rejected □ Sarah Boseley reports

Dobson declares war on tobacco

THE Government declared war on tobacco yesterday, with a white paper that set targets for cutting the number of smokers by 1.5 million and promised a £50 million campaign to persuade children not to start smoking and adults to quit.

But some campaigners were disappointed. They wanted tougher action faster, regretted the absence of a smoking ban in public places and an immediate advertising ban, instead of one that starts "soon", and criticised the funding available. But as the first draft bill against tobacco, the white paper was welcomed.

In the Commons, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, said he intended to protect children from the tobacco industry, which needs 120,000 new young smokers every year — virtually nobody starts smoking in middle age.

"For years, the tobacco industry has poured millions into highly sophisticated advertising campaigns. People of all ages, including children, have been exposed to clever and eye-catching advertising," he said. "All that will now change. Tobacco advertising is going to end and it's going to end soon."

The number of children starting to smoke is rising, while the number of adult smokers has stopped falling. The Government, which pledged £100 million over three years to counter smoking, set separate progress targets for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, it wants to reduce smoking among children



from 13 per cent to 9 per cent or less by 2010, which will mean 110,000 fewer children smoking. The target for adults is from 28 per cent to 24 per cent by 2010, a drop of 1.5 million. It wants to cut smoking among pregnant women by 55,000, from 23 per cent to 18 per cent by 2010.

"Smoking is now the principal avoidable cause of premature deaths in Britain," said Mr Dobson. "It hits the worst off hardest of all. Smoking is

one of the principal causes of the health gap which leads to poorer people being ill more often and dying sooner. Smoking harms people who do not smoke. Smoking harms babies in the womb."

But it would be "an uphill struggle", he warned, "because the tobacco companies are committed to doing everything they can to promote the sale of cigarettes."

There was some disappointment from the British Medical

Association. "The Government has taken an historic first step against the tobacco industry, but its approach is more tentative and less courageous than doctors hoped for," said Ian Bogle, BMA chairman. It was disappointed a ban on smoking in the workplace had been rejected.

The Health Service Confederation said the smoking cessation programme, which will focus on counselling and nicotine patches for the poorest in

areas already designated as "health action zones", was inadequately funded. "The Government has announced £50 million for these advice clinics which is meagre given the massive burden smoking-related illnesses place on the NHS," said Stephen Thornton, its chief executive.

The Royal College of Physicians was delighted with a government prepared to implement "policies which may be unpopular but which will

save lives", said its president, George Alberti, but it would have liked smoking in public places banned. The Institute of Health Services Management said the paper did not go far enough. "The overall costs of smoking are too high to excuse a cautious approach," said Suzanne Tyler, deputy director.

Clive Bates, director of Action on Smoking and Health, said it was delighted at "the first serious and broad-

based assault on the appalling burden of illness, addiction and death caused by tobacco since scientists first warned of the dangers 40 years ago."

Organisations representing pubs and restaurants, which will sign a voluntary charter offering no-smoking areas, were delighted.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOWMAN

Main points

- Action to protect children and young people:
 - Legislation in 1999/00 parliament to end tobacco advertising on billboards
 - Minimal tobacco advertising to be allowed in shops
 - Under-age sales clampdown
 - Proposals for a proof of age card for young smokers
 - Cigarette machines sited so as not to attract children
- An NHS smoking cessation programme:
 - GPs' referrals of would-be non-smokers to counselling
 - Discretionary, free, one-week nicotine replacement therapy. Pregnant women a priority.
- Nationwide campaign:
 - £50 million anti-smoking marketing campaign
- A "clean air" charter:
 - Smoking and non-smoking areas in pubs and restaurants
 - National targets for smoke-free zones in public places
 - Scheme to "badge" bars and restaurants with smoke-free zones
 - Health and Safety Commission to consult in spring 1999 on protecting employees from smoke at work
- International action:
 - £35 million extra to combat tobacco smuggling
 - Support for World Health Organisation's anti-tobacco work

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Shake-up of housing benefit proposed

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE Government plans to limit cash support for services for elderly and vulnerable people living in the community, giving local authorities the job of deciding who should get help.

Consultative proposals published yesterday would end the system of open-ended funding of support through housing benefit. Councils would be allocated up to £750 million a year to disburse according to need.

The move would cut the spiralling housing benefit bill by as much as £500 million, leaving it to meet strictly bricks-and-mortar costs.

In a novel departure, councils would be "fined" a portion of their funding if they failed to reach agreement among housing, social and probation services on how it should be spent. The Government would withhold a por-

tion and allocate the rest direct to the competing groups.

Councils and housing groups were doubtful about the proposals. They feared that some of the 700,000 people at present receiving support services could lose out.

Paul Lautman, assistant head of housing at the Local Government Association, said: "Many people need just a little bit of support to continue living independently. Housing benefit does that very effectively."

The proposals involve people in sheltered and supported housing. Support services range from an alarm system and resident warden, costing a few pounds a week, to intensive, non-care help with personal affairs, costing in excess of £100.

Housing benefit was never intended to meet such costs. The Conservative government tried to restrict it to bricks-and-mortar costs but

backed off in the face of a storm of protest.

Since then the courts have ruled that benefit can only be used to pay for support and counselling relating to the fabric of a dwelling. The Government has had to introduce emergency regulations to protect people affected.

Alistair Darling, Social Security Secretary, yesterday said the proposals would set up a single, clear budget for support services in place of a patchwork of arrangements.

The Government at present had no control over the quality or cost of services. "The new arrangements will enable many thousands of vulnerable people to get the cost-effective and high quality services which they need."

Under the proposals, the Government would pass responsibility to local government from 2003. Transitional arrangements, including a power to bear down on high cost services, would apply from next November.

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6 BRITAIN

BBC2 cameras follow police corruption case

Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

A BBC crew, working on a series to be aired next year, followed the case of police corruption in the Merseyside force that culminated in the imprisonment of a detective chief inspector.

The BBC stumbled across the case during three years of filming the police for the series *Mersey Blues*. Detective Chief Inspector Elmore Davies, whose flatmate Mike A'Hern starred as Warrior in ITV's *Gladiators* and was also convicted, had been followed by the cameras before his conviction in September.

The five-part *Mersey Blues* was announced yesterday as part of BBC2's winter schedule. The corporation has been unable to transmit it for 18 months, as it was *sub judice*.

BBC2 controller Mark Thompson, since promoted to BBC director of regional and national broadcasting,

said his final, £50.3 million schedule had "something new in every genre".

He highlighted a new drama serial, *Births, Marriages and Deaths*, starring Bill by Mouth actor Ray Winstone in the story of a marathon stag event with unforeseen repercussions.

Among new comedy series is *Gimme Gimme Gimme*, starring Kathy Burke and James Dreyfus as flatmates, one straight and one gay, "in hot pursuit of the man of their dreams".

The League of Gentlemen, the Perrier Award-winning comedy group, receive their first TV showing in an eponymous series set in the fictional town of Royston Vasey.

BBC2's strength in the Friday night comedy battle with Channel 4 will be helped by the return of Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer in a new sketch show.

Also headed for Friday nights is the eighth series of the cult sci-fi comedy *Red Dwarf*.



Artist Ray Hitchins, of Cheadle, Staffordshire, protests against the state of modern art by dumping cow dung outside the Tate Gallery in central London, where Chris Ofili's Turner Prize-winning work, which includes elephant dung, is on show. PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW FEARNS

'Spy confession' of killed hostages is false, say relatives

James Mack in Moscow

RELATIVES and employers of the four hostages beheaded by kidnappers in Chechnia insisted yesterday that a videotaped "confession" of espionage by the victims, screened in the capital, Grozny, was false.

The Chechen vice-president, Vakha Arsanov, showed the video of the three Britons and New Zealander to local journalists, saying it was found by Chechen special services on Wednesday.

One of the Britons, Peter Kennedy, was shown saying in Russian: "We have been recruited by the English intelligence service. We installed a satellite aerial so that all phone conversations on Chechen territory were heard by German, English and Israeli special services and the CIA."

He said the group had installed equipment to spy on Chechen military bases and to oppose the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. One of the journalists who

saw the tape, Alkha Tsoyev, a Chechen working for Reuters news agency in Grozny, said the video showed the four men looking unarmed. Another said they looked haggard and had heavy beards.

Apart from Mr Kennedy, the men identified themselves as the Britons Rudolf Petschi and Dmitry Hickey and the New Zealander Stanley Shaw. Their employer, Granger Telecom, said in a statement yesterday: "There is no truth whatsoever to the suggestion that the former telecommunication engineers had any association with any UK intelligence organisations."

"We would urge that the media check restraint in disclosing the details of the material given the likely circumstances in which... the video was filmed."

Mr Hickey's father, Eamon, who runs The Crown Inn at Thames Ditton, Surrey, said his son was not a spy. "These confessions have obviously been forced out of them."

The British ambassador in Moscow, Sir Andrew Wood, dismissed the "confession". "Any reasonable analysis would show that we have no wish to spy on Chechen territory," he said.

According to Chechnia's president, Aslan Maskhadov, the men, kidnapped from their guarded residence in Grozny on October 3, were murdered by their abductors during a failed attempt to free them. Despite Foreign Office warnings that Britons should stay away from Chechnia, where ransom payments are big business, Granger sent the men to Grozny to work on installing a £50 million mobile telephone system.

The territory's Soviet-era phone network, along with much of the country's infrastructure, was destroyed in the 1994-96 war of independence against Russia, which now has almost no influence over the territory.

Chechnia's young, heavily armed warriors became radicalised and Islamised during the war. The territory is now seen as the main stronghold for the growing fundamentalist Islamic movement in the north Caucasus, known to its opponents as Wahabism after the Saudi-organised sect.

There have been reports of training camps inside Chechnia where young men from the north Caucasus receive religious instruction and military training.

It seems unlikely, though, that the sophisticated eavesdropping devices used by intelligence organisations, such as Britain's GCHQ, would need to be placed in the region to pick up local mobile phones and walkie-talkies — particularly when countries friendly to the West, like Georgia, are just next door.

In the anarchic world of the north Caucasus, the boundaries between business rivalry, squabbles over ownership of hostages, politics, clan rivalry and religious feuding, are hazy. It is possible that the kidnappers of the Granger employees — or another group who held them as hostages — were also involved in religious politics.

They may have seen the literature of fringe post-Soviet Islam, particularly a popular pamphlet entitled *Confessions of an English Spy*.

Mr Maskhadov was reported yesterday to have banned the public release of the video, Mr Arsanov, whose family was involved in the Granger Telecom contract, said: "They must have been forced to confess. But we do not know yet."

or the United States, led to UN sanctions in 1992. But last August, the UN Security Council's law in the Netherlands.

Dr Swire acknowledged there were "complications" because a decision on the handover would probably be referred to 300 Libyan grassroots committees.

Mr Blair, the first prime minister to meet the Lockerbie families, was urged to follow up any leads that emerged during a trial, though the Government has repeatedly signalled to Libya that if it surrendered the two men the Gaddafi regime would be insulated from wider damage and UN sanctions lifted.

"The two accused, even if found guilty, could only be small minnows in a very large pond," Dr Swire said. "I see nothing on the horizon that would make me alter my opinion, which is that the handover will definitely occur, and that it will occur within the next few weeks. We have been patient for the past 10 years, we can wait a bit longer."

Mr Annan said after Saturday's talks that he was expecting a decision from Libya in the near future. But there was confusion yesterday after the country's justice minister said a Libyan legal team intended to seek further clarification of the proposed trial from the UN legal counsel.

Libya's refusal to hand over the suspects, on the grounds that they would not receive a fair trial in Scotland

Blair hopeful for Lockerbie trial

Blair hopeful for Lockerbie trial

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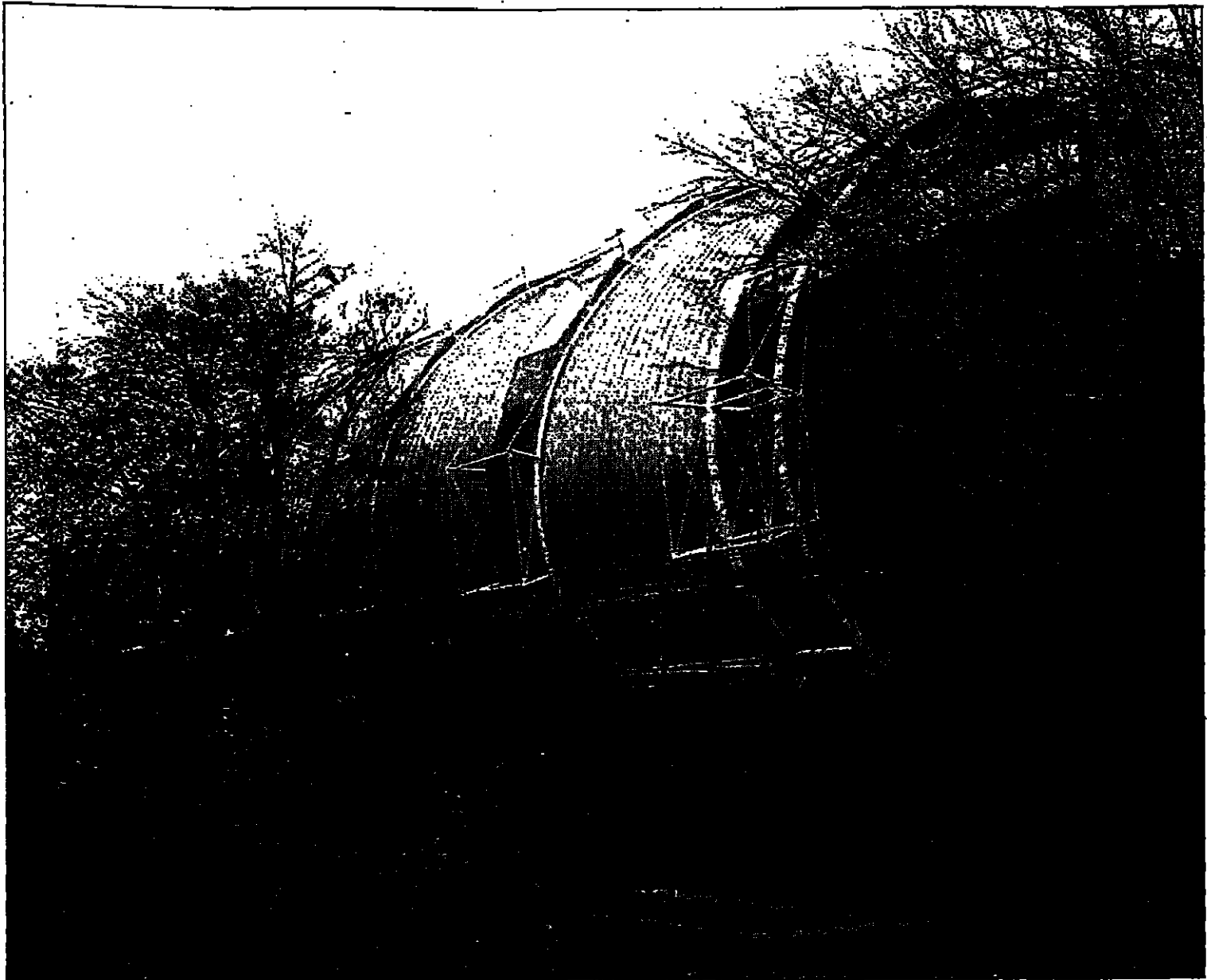
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The new magistrates court in Southampton. Detractors complain that it is out of keeping with neighbouring listed buildings. PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENEN

Brickbats flung at 'Nissen hut' courthouse

Geoffrey Gibbs

ARCHITECTS and conservationists are locked in a war of words over a futuristic court building nearing completion in an historic city.

Opponents have likened the new magistrates court in Southampton to a Nissen hut and claim that the £13 million building is out of keeping with neighbouring, mainly 19th century listed buildings.

The glass, steel and

Painted render courthouse is due to open next autumn on the site of the former Ordnance Survey building. Its 12 court rooms will bring under one roof court offices now in three separate buildings.

The radical design was given the green light by Hampshire county council, despite objections from Southampton city council and the City of Southampton Society, whose chairman, Jack Candy, condemned the building as "an absolute disgrace".

Nicholas France, a canon whose 19th century presbytery overlooks the new courthouse, said the style was out of character with the conservation area in Rockstone Place on the edge of Southampton's commercial sector. "It's a hideous construction: a great, ugly pipe in the middle of early Victorian and late Georgian buildings," he said yesterday. "It's a space rocket, Cape Canaveral and Saddam Hussein's secret bunker all rolled into one."

Mr Candy likened the

building to a Channel tunnel boring machine or a Nissen hut. "It might be suitable in another site, but not this site. We objected to the Lord Chancellor's office, but they said it was a matter for the local council."

Hampshire council architects, who designed the building on a commission from the Lord Chancellor's department, said care had been taken to design it to be sympathetic to the historically important site. High-quality materials used were practical and durable.

"The form of the building responds positively to the users and the environment both on the inside and the outside," the county council said last night. "Our architectural response was to design a modern building rather than a false pastiche, so that Southampton can have a significant public building for the 21st century. It needed to take into account the function of the building and be dignified and impressive."

Mike West, justices chief executive for the Hampshire magistrates courts committee, acknowledged that the building was not like a traditional courthouse. "But I am more concerned about what it does inside and how easy it is to maintain. I think the materials they have used will cut the maintenance costs."

Huge public pay-off to college's offshore scandal professor

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

A COLLEGE head who lost nearly £1 million promoting offshore courses in Greece and Spain has received a £150,000 retirement package paid by the taxpayer, an official report reveals today.

David Leyland, the former director of Southampton Institute of Higher Education, took early retirement after a scandal over courses offered in Athens and Alicante.

Now it is revealed by the National Audit Office, Parliament's financial watchdog, that nearly £200,000 has been paid in retirement packages to Professor Leyland and two other senior academics who

left after the debacle.

The retirement deal for Prof Leyland also included the taxpayer footing a £2,350 solicitor's bill for a revised divorce settlement; £122,794 towards his pension; £22,500 in termination pay; and £12,000 in professional fees. The other two academics shared a £133,000 payout.

The scandal followed votes of no confidence in the director by staff, students and the board of governors when cuts were sought at the 20,000-student college in Southampton to cover courses overseas.

The report reveals that the college opened an offshore college in an Athens red light district, offering franchised Nottingham Trent university degrees. Some £13,000 cash received from Athens for ser-

vices was taken to Britain by couriers in brown envelopes. Losses reached £838,500 before the campus was closed because it could not recruit enough students to study business administration, law and maritime studies.

A similar franchise scheme at Alicante university ran up debts of £301,400, as it could not recruit students from Britain in maritime leisure management. The scheme was exposed by the Southern Evening Echo after the college accepted a student with six GCSEs and wondrous experience to take a degree.

The auditors attack the director for putting £700,000 of public money at risk by issuing writs against the Southern Evening Echo and the Observer, which also wrote

about the scheme. They also reveal that the college employed a retired police superintendent to find out who produced a satirical magazine about the scandal. Some £33,000 was spent in legal fees on the abortive actions.

The report condemns the college for deficiencies, weaknesses and contravening financial arrangements in accepting cash in brown envelopes.

The report also condemns management procedures which left too much power in the hands of the college director and chairman of governors, the late Michael Andrews.

Last night Roger Brown, the college's new principal, said: "The institute will consider the report very seriously. [It] has taken or is taking actions to deal with all the issues."

Plot to hire wife's killer through Exchange & Mart

Husband in hitman case gets 10 years

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

A MAN convicted of trying to hire a hitman through Exchange & Mart to kill his wife was yesterday jailed for 10 years. He had also plotted to murder his stepson after collecting the insurance on his wife's death, detectives said later.

Keith Rigby, aged 46, from Colcar, West Yorkshire, was described as "dangerous and dedicated" by the detective who led the investigation. Rigby said nothing when he was jailed at Manchester crown court.

Rigby, a cafe owner, married his wife, Susan, after she answered his lonely hearts advertisement. The marriage was not a success and Rigby planned to have her killed for £150,000 insurance money.

He spotted an advertisement in Exchange & Mart for a private detective company in Dusseldorf which offered to trace missing persons and carry out "searches and rescue".

He left a message on the answerphone of the firm and then rang them and said: "I want somebody knocked off. Do you do it?"

The private detective, who worked for the Ministry of Defence in Germany while de-



Rigby gave officers this photograph of his wife

ciding whether to go into the security business full time, initially thought it was a joke. When Rigby persisted, he told his employers who contacted the MoD police.

An arrangement was made to meet Rigby at Manchester airport where an undercover detective spoke to him. He made it clear his intention to kill his wife was serious.

In two further meetings with undercover officers from the National Crime Squad at Hollingworth Lake in Rochdale, Rigby told them he wanted the death to look like

an accident, and he would then kill his stepson himself.

The Recorder of Manchester, Judge Rhys Davies, told Rigby yesterday he gave the impression of "a very intelligent, a very determined and... a very wicked man."

Susan Rigby, aged 44, told the court at his trial last month that her husband, whom she had divorced, had her dog and cat put down because he did not want them in the house.

The trial heard Rigby provided the undercover officers with passport photos of his wife and routes that she normally took. He wanted her to die in a car crash to avoid suspicion. He agreed to pay £20,000 for the job and gave the officers cash for their expenses in setting it up.

Paul Marshall, defending, said Rigby, who denied soliciting to murder, had been "driven round the bend" by his wife. "He tried in vain to recreate the happiness and content he felt when [his late first wife] was alive. The reverse has happened. His life is now in ruins."

Detective Inspector Darren Shenton, who led the investigation, said yesterday that Rigby was a dangerous and dedicated man. He had no doubt he would have followed his wife's death with an attempt on his stepson's life.

Huge rise in rail deaths

Train safety inspectors say new figures are a matter of concern

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

TRAIN deaths almost doubled in the past year, said safety inspectors, as the level crossing fatalities and the Southall rail disaster, the railway inspectorate announced yesterday.

Frank Davies, chairman of the Health and Safety Executive, said the figures were a matter of concern. Deaths caused by train accidents rose from 25 to 48, although the number of accidents decreased to 89 to 105, the lowest since records started in 1959.

The number of people killed at level crossings rose from three to 14, while suicides and

deaths, including children playing on the line, increased from 252 to 265.

The HSE downplayed the figures, saying that the railway remained the safest method of land transport. "We have no evidence from these figures that most matters under the direct control of railway operators are less safe than they were before privatisation," said Mr Davies.

Two-thirds of the delays on the network are caused by technical problems, which means that in many cases repair work is being carried out inadequately. Mr Davies warned that there would be a huge loss of life in a train crash if the present level of

vandalism continued. Of the 619 incidents of damage to cab windcreens, 512 were caused by missiles being thrown. Mr Davies said 51 per cent of rail accidents had been caused by vandals.

Railtrack last night said it had sacked one contractor in the Bristol area, and that it was sending out "hit squads" around the country to investigate reports of inadequate maintenance.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union, said: "Trespassers and vandals gaining access to an unsupervised railway are a serious risk not only to themselves but to railway staff and the travelling public. One in four deaths of trespassers occurs in the vicinity of stations. If they were staffed at all times, railway security would be greatly enhanced."

Mother killed children with insulin

A MOTHER injected her two young children with a lethal dose of insulin before using the syringe on herself, an inquest was told yesterday.

Paula Wilkinson was leading a "schizophrenic existence" at the time of her death in June, a coroner's court in Warrington, Cheshire, heard.

The 33-year-old nurse was found lying beside her son Mark, aged eight, and five-year-old daughter Hannah in the main bedroom of their home in Runcorn, Cheshire.

Police officers forced their way into the three bedroomed, mid-terrace house in Boston on July 1 following reports that the family had not been seen for several days.

Paul Wilkinson, Paula's husband and the children's father, broke down in tears

and left the courtroom as Detective Chief Inspector Peter Duffy described the discovery of the bodies.

Paula, he said, was lying on the right hand side of the double bed, her daughter Hannah was in the middle and Mark was on the left hand side.

Two notes in "shaky and uncontrolled" handwriting found in the bedroom and written by Paula stated that Hannah had died at 8pm on Saturday, June 27, and her brother three hours later.

Burial clothes were laid out neatly on the children's beds and Mrs Wilkinson's funeral wishes were made clear in her final messages.

It was obvious, said Mr Duffy, that she had "taken the lives of Mark and Hannah before committing suicide."

"The sofa was arranged with certain property which

only can be described as a shrine. There were children's toys, Paula's purse and brown envelope containing 10 letters and greetings cards written in normal writing," he told the hearing.

He said inquiries into the mother's mental state showed "she was having some personal problems and those were her main cause for concern". He said she was leading a "schizophrenic existence", displaying one side of her character to family and different side to colleagues and close friends.

While her family believed her to be reasonably happy and normal, others recognised she was depressed, subdued and distressed. When last seen, he said, she was described as "being in an appalling and dreadful condition".

The inquest heard that Mrs

Wilkinson had talked more than once to friends of suicide and had mentioned killing herself with insulin, but was dismissed as being both "melodramatic and attention-seeking".

Mr Duffy said a syringe and needle and a vial of insulin was found in the master bedroom. He said his officers concluded that "Paula Wilkinson took the lives of her two children... by injection of lethal quantities of insulin."

Following this [she] took her life in the same way." Cheshire coroner John Hibbert recorded the medical cause of death for all three as an insulin overdose. Recording a verdict of unlawful killing on the two children and suicide on their mother, he said: "My sympathies, and I am sure the sympathies of a lot of other people, go to the family," said Mr Hibbert.

Thirties spa gets into shape with tea dance after £600,000 revival

Martin Wainwright on a homage to sun and mud

BRITAIN'S first "medical sunwalk", designed to bring the riviera to the north, was reborn yesterday with a tea dance in front of the Queen. Dignified couples from Harrogate gyrated to Rumba One on the electronic organ, as the town's unique mixture of graceful architecture and 1930s quackery was launched on a new lease of life.

"A beautiful and lovely place, and how wonderful to make use of it again," said the Queen, peering out through a light mist at one of the 36 neighbouring sulphur springs — all sited within an acre and making up the greatest known concentration in the world.

The mayor of Harrogate, Ruth Timmins, in pillar-box red and a doily-bobbed hat, added her blessings to the £600,000 restoration backed by lottery funds.

Built in 1933 to compete with Baden Baden, Marienbad and other reviving continental spas, the Sunwalk, pavilion and terraces were a centrepiece of the "Harrogate treatment" which inflicted mudbaths, sulphurous douches and other treatments on invalids and hypochondriacs alike.

Topped with stained glass, lavishly heated and filled with sub-tropical plants, the buildings were a stark contrast to the Yorkshire spa's bracing air.

A special train from London brought guests to the opening performed by Lord Horder, then physician to the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VIII. "The influence of a beautiful and peaceful environment upon the promotion of health and happiness has never been so obvious as here. May the sun never cease to shine on this magnificent structure," pronounced Horder.

In fact, to save funds, the complex was closed in the 1970s — making the town's former Tory council highly unpopular. Two years ago, after vandalism and arson damage, the central, domed octagon and colonnades with trellised wisteria (where lounging beds could be hired by those "failing to thrive") won a £440,500 lottery grant. Other problems cropped up, including the bankruptcy of the first restoration contractor. But council and business funding saw the project through — paving the way for a pattern of regular meetings of the Harrogate Tea Dance Society in the pavilion.



Couples enjoy a celebratory tea dance in the Sun Pavilion, a refurbishment of Harrogate's spa venue. PHOTOGRAPH: DON MURPHY

Drink-driving hunt master is banned after CPS appeal

Geoffrey Gibbs

A HUNT master stopped for drink-driving while taking his injured wife home from a hunt dinner was yesterday banned from driving for three years after embarrased magistrates were ordered to increase an earlier, more lenient sentence.

Prosecutors and anti drink-drive campaigners were horrified when Rodney Ellis, joint master of the Tedworth hunt in Wiltshire, escaped with a fine when he appeared before Kennet magistrates in May this year.

The huntsman was stopped by police as he drove his wife Georgina back to their home near Marlborough. He told officers his wife was in pain after falling from her horse and bruising tendons in her leg while riding with the hunt in the Savernake forest earlier that day. A breath test showed he was almost twice over the limit.

Crown Prosecution Service officials launched an appeal after Ellis was ordered to pay £500 in fines and costs but escaped a ban. The Court of Appeal agreed with their assertion that the original ruling was flawed. Sentencing Ellis, the presiding magistrate,

Lady Belinda Johnston, had said: "You had just cause in driving because this was a sufficient emergency."

Yesterday, as magistrates were forced into an embarrassing U turn, it emerged that Ellis had a previous conviction for drink-driving and was banned for a year in 1991. In a three minute hearing at Kennet magistrates court near Devizes, Lady Johnston, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, General Sir Maurice Johnston, told Ellis he was disqualified from driving.

She told him: "Our hands are tied. We can do nothing else. We are banning you for three years and your licence will be endorsed."

Maria Cape, of the Campaign Against Drink Driving, welcomed the decision. "This is a victory for common sense," she said.

At the earlier hearing Andrew Jenkins, defending, said that after being discharged from hospital Mrs Ellis had gone to the dinner expecting a lift home from friends. Realising she was in a great deal of pain Ellis, who admitted drink driving, asked the friend if they could have a lift. The friend did not want to leave and Mr Ellis thought he had no choice but to drive.

Dr. J. C. 10.5.20

As hysteria mounts in Washington it's clear one side has badly misjudged the crisis, but which one?

Impeachment sneaks up on Clinton

Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL CLINTON and the United States political establishment are peering into the abyss today, suddenly realising that Washington is on the verge of its greatest constitutional crisis.

Or perhaps not. Five weeks ago, after the midterm elections, the prospect of President Clinton's impeachment seemed to recede almost as rapidly as it had now advanced. In those elections, in which the president's Republican accusers were rocked by surprise Democrat gains, the voters seemed to say no to impeachment. The subsequent resignation of Mr Clinton's bouncer-in-chief, Newt Gingrich, and his replacement as House of Representatives Speaker by the apparently pragmatic Bob Livingston, only added to the sense that the investigation was running into the sand.

But it seems that the White House might have relaxed too much. The election results and opinion poll findings might have been taken to mean that the Republican Clinton-haters would give up. But if that was the case, it could turn out to be a very costly mistake because, driven by the Republican whip Tom DeLay, the momentum towards impeachment has increased recently to the point where no one can say whether Mr Clinton will be in office in six months.

If the administration has made a single key mistake it might be Mr Clinton's failure to reiterate his personal contribution. For whatever reason, Mr Clinton was complacent in midterm victory. One of the few things that can be said with certainty is that, within the next 24 hours, the House of Representatives judiciary committee will adopt as many as four articles of impeachment against the president.

Police hold man who offered Jones \$1m

THE car park tycoon who shouldered his way on to the national stage by offering \$1 million (£600,000) to Paula Jones to settle her sexual harassment case against President Clinton was arrested yesterday on charges relating to a plot to kill a former business partner, writes Michael Ellison in New York.

It is alleged that Abe Hirschfeld attempted to

arrange the contract killing two years ago of Stanley Stahl, a real estate magnate, after a property deal went sour.

Mr Hirschfeld, aged 79, has used his millions in failed attempts to win offices ranging from United States senator to lieutenant-governor of New York.

He was once the subject of a New York Post headline which asked: "Who Is This Nut?" This might have

been less surprising had he not owned the paper at the time.

Asked then if he was crazy, the tycoon replied: "I am. Any person that achieves things and accomplishes things is a little crazy."

His offer in the Jones case was withdrawn because, he said, he felt he had been shunned and used. President Clinton agreed a month ago to find

\$850,000 from insurance policies and his legal defence fund in an attempt to close the matter.

It is claimed that Mr Hirschfeld backed out of the alleged plot against 73-year-old Mr Stahl, and the pair arrived at an out-of-court deal in February.

He denied the plot charges. "I never had an interest in killing anybody," he said before his arrest. "I don't need it. Everybody knows I can't

they would then go to the full House next Thursday, which would debate them in emergency session. If any article was passed by a simple majority — even if the others were defeated — then the Senate would have to try the president as soon as possible (probably next month). If two-thirds of the Senate voted to convict Mr Clinton, he would be dismissed immediately and the vice-president, Al Gore, would succeed him.

So now the focus of US domestic politics is on a group whose existence had been widely forgotten: Republican moderates. At least 11 Republicans must swing against impeachment next week to save Mr Clinton. In reality the number probably needs to be higher, since at least three southern Democrats are possibly going to vote for impeachment.

Six of the Republicans have already stated their opposition to impeachment. A further 34 are deemed undecided

by either the whips or White House. Over the coming days, the arm-twisting will be intense.

Some grassroots rightwing Republican groupings have decided that overt pressure might be counter-productive, but the Christian Coalition is mobilising its members with pro-impeachment petitions and is flooding the lawmakers with letters and e-mail. The White House, in contrast, has invited one undecided Republican, Vic Fazio of New York, to travel with the president to the Middle East on Air Force One this weekend as part of a congressional delegation.

The stakes for Mr Clinton, and the Republicans, over the coming days could hardly be higher. But there is a tendency for supposedly informed opinion in Washington to veer rapidly from complacency to fatalism. The current hysteria may look very silly this time next week. Then again, it might not.

Rural poor are overtaken by desperate urban underclass

John Vidal

FORGET images of starving children in a barren drought-baked countryside. The stark new face of global hunger, says the United Nations, is to be seen in rapidly growing African and Asian cities where up to 1,000 million people now face severe malnutrition and food shortages.

A new UN Food and Agriculture Organisation report paints a bleak prospect for the poorest urban dwellers in developing countries. Infrastructure in these burgeoning, chaotic cities is unable to keep pace with the demand for food. People are being forced to spend up to 80 per cent of their income on what they eat, while paid work is scarce or non-existent.

According to World Bank figures, the number of poor people in cities has more than doubled globally in 10 years and should reach a billion by the end of next year. The urban poor now outnumber

the rural poor in many countries, a trend that is expected to grow as the world becomes more urbanised.

Cities are exploding worldwide, says the report. Asian cities are growing by 3 per cent a year and African ones by approximately 4 per cent. Some cities, such as Dhaka in Bangladesh, are growing by more than 1,300 people a day or almost 500,000 a year.

People are exchanging rural poverty and lack of opportunity for appalling city conditions and dismal living standards, says the report. The implications for food security, says Rachel Nugent, one of the FAO economists who wrote the report, are

alarming. "The poor are growing in number every day. They often have neither access to nor the money to buy food."

The price of food has risen as cities have grown, and urban food prices have risen more than the cost of living and more than incomes, says the report. One study showed that consumers in cities spend, on average, 30 per cent more on food than rural consumers do, but get fewer calories.

Physical conditions also pose problems for the poorest, who lack transport but have to go long distances to markets, and their food is often contaminated due to crowded conditions.

Food supplies, says the report, do not always reach the consumer. "Up to 30 per cent of all food has been lost by the time it reaches the market, which adds to prices and further marginalises the poorest."

As cities grow, they require bigger and more developed transport and distribution to get food to consumers. But in

many cases there is little public money available for roads, vehicles and market places, and the private sector is less interested in feeding the poorest.

Many cities have been unable to cope with the extra demands of their new inhabitants. A city of 10 million people may need to import at least 6,000 tonnes of food every day; this requires much co-ordination between producers, transporters, markets and retailers. City administrators and the private sector find themselves struggling to cope.

What is needed, says the report, is more investment in infrastructure and more encouragement by the authorities to allow people to grow food in cities. In China, up to 20 per cent of the food needs of cities is met by urban farming. Havana provides almost 5 per cent of Cuba's food.

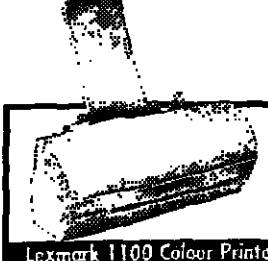
"The poor are being ignored," says Dr Nugent. "The situation could get worse. It's pretty scary."

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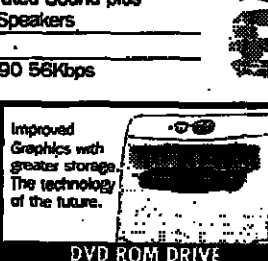
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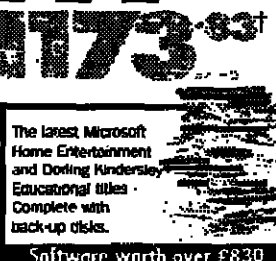
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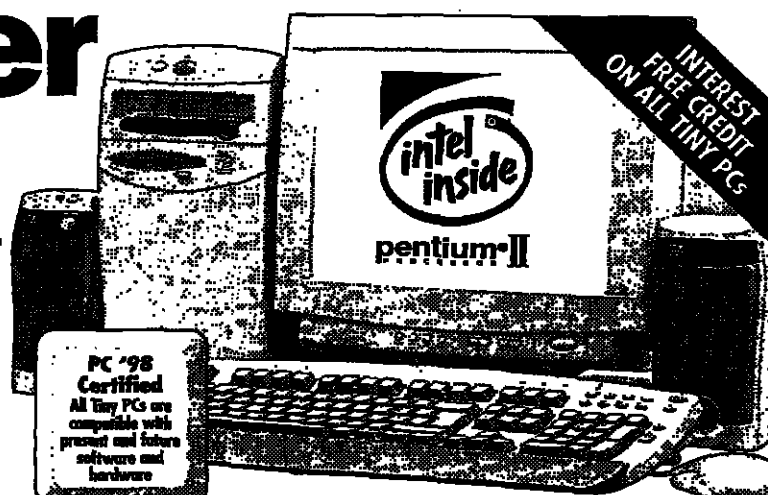
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Brazil's growing bands of street children, seen here clustering near the screens of a television shop, reflect the explosion of poor people in cities: globally they should number a billion a year from now

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MAIER

Arafat fuels health rumours as Israelis dig in on PLO charter

David Sharrock in Gaza

YASSER Arafat, the Palestinian Authority president, has fuelled speculation about his health by telling an audience of Americans that he might not live to see the completion of the Middle East peace process.

Mr Arafat, whose hands and lower lip tremble constantly, was asked by members of a Washington think tank how the Palestinian Authority might look in 20 years. He replied: "I don't know if I'll live one year or two years."

The exchange between Mr Arafat and members of the Washington Institute of Near East Policy was reported by the Israeli daily Ha'aretz yesterday. The meeting took place

at Mr Arafat's office in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The 68-year-old has always denied rumours of Parkinson's disease. He often looks tired and pale in public but his aides blame long working hours.

Mr Arafat's neurologist, Asraf Kurdi, said last year that his patient suffered from bouts of depression but did not have Parkinson's, a degenerative disease that affects motor function.

Fulfilling his side of the US-brokered Wye River land-for-security agreement — which Israel has suspended, claiming breaches by the Palestinians — Mr Arafat yesterday convened officials and legislators to revoke clauses of the Palestine Liberation Organi-

sation's (PLO) charter calling for Israel's destruction.

On Monday President Clinton will address the Palestinian National Council (PNC) in Gaza City. Under the Wye agreement, the PNC is to reaffirm a letter sent by Mr Arafat to Mr Clinton which revokes clauses of the PLO founding charter calling for Israel's destruction. Israel insists a vote be taken by a show of hands, while the Palestinians say only approval by acclamation is required.

Mr Netanyahu, meanwhile, said he had ordered the army to use a firm hand against Palestinian rioters, and remained adamant that a troop withdrawal from areas of the West Bank next week would not go ahead on the schedule

agreed at Wye. The issue of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails has ignited violence on the West Bank in which two Palestinian teenagers have died.

Thousands walked in pouring rain with the coffin of Jihad Iyad yesterday, the first day of winter. Several dozen Palestinians broke away from the procession and threw stones at Israeli soldiers who replied with tear gas, but the confrontation was brief.

Meanwhile, protests by rightwing Israelis against Mr Clinton's visit intensified, with signs reading "Clinton Go Home" strung along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem motorway and posters proclaiming "Clinton is a Palestinian" plastered around Jerusalem.

صكرا من الامين

Tribunal jails Croat for rape 'war crime'

Stephen Bates
European Affairs Editor

A NACT of rape was classified for the first time as a war crime by the United Nations tribunal in the Hague yesterday — the 50th anniversary of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights — as the court sentenced a Bosnian Croat former paramilitary commander to 10 years' imprisonment.

Anto Furundzija, now aged 29 and once leader of a gang called the Jokers, was sentenced after being found guilty on two counts, as a perpetrator of torture in violation of the laws or customs of war, and of aiding and abetting outrages upon personal dignity.

He was found to have stood by and watched while another paramilitary beat and raped a female detainee during an interrogation in 1993. His sentence was double the term demanded by the prosecutors. Furundzija led the Jokers during the Bosnian war, operating from headquarters in a bungalow in Nadilock, near Vitez. He was arrested by Nato troops acting on a sealed indictment in December last year, and his detention since then will be counted towards his sentence.

The case against him centred on the testimony of the victim, identified in court as Witness A, whom his defence lawyers accused of having a

biased memory because of her ordeal.

It was stated in court that the Jokers, a special unit of paramilitary "police", had arrested A and that she was interrogated in Furundzija's presence. As A was questioned, the other soldier present had threatened to insert a knife into her vagina if she did not tell the truth.

It was said that while Furundzija interrogated A and another prisoner, known as Victim B, they were beaten on the soles of their feet with a baton. Furundzija did not intervene when A was forced to have oral and vaginal sex with the soldier.

In its statement, the court said expert evidence showed that even when suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, a witness may still be accounted reliable. It added that it accepted Witness A's testimony. The court defined torture as an act of coercion taking place in the presence of a public official acting as an organ of the state or any other authority-wielding entity.

It added: "An accused... is responsible as a co-perpetrator of torture if he... participates in an integral part and partakes of the prohibited purpose behind the torture, to obtain information or a confession, to punish or intimidate, to humiliate, coerce or discriminate against the victim."

Although yesterday's judgment is the third to be handed



Anto Furundzija (above), the Bosnian Croat sentenced in The Hague yesterday; and (left) Ahmet in Bosnia, where Nato troops caught him last year

down by the tribunal arising out of the Bosnian war, it was the first to focus exclusively on an act of rape. Other defendants have been charged with rapes, but as part of other war crimes.

In a 15-minute judgment the presiding judge, Florence

Mumba, said: "The chamber finds it indisputable that rape and other serious sexual assaults in situations of armed conflict entail criminal liability of the perpetrators."

Furundzija will serve 10 years for torture and eight years consecutively for rape.

His lawyer, Luka Misetic, claimed he was "truly shocked" by the verdict and would appeal. "Every piece of evidence contradicted the testimony of the main witness," he said.

Mr Misetic claimed that other defendants had got off

more lightly adding: "Drazen Erdemovic admitted killing 73 people and got five years. Clearly there are questions of proportionality."

Erdemovic, also a Bosnian Croat, was found guilty last March and is serving his sentence in Norway. It is likely

that Furundzija will be imprisoned there or in Italy or Finland.

In a statement the prosecution said: "It is fitting that the judgment was delivered on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. It is an important decision be-

cause it demonstrates that acts of rape will be dealt with seriously. International humanitarian law is fully equipped to assert that persons have the right to respect for their physical integrity, even in times of armed conflict."

Terrifying power that can turn civilians into spoils of war

Commentary
Sue Lees

Yesterday the United Nations War Tribunal found a man guilty of the war crime of rape for the first time.

It is symbolic that, on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, rape should be elevated to the status of a war crime, alongside other forms of violence waged against civilian populations.

We tend to think of rape as an individual act but its historical origins rest with the gang. The Latin word from which rape derives means "to seize or carry off".

In ancient times, warring tribes abducted women who then became the spoils of the war, which is perhaps why we speak of a woman's reputation being spoiled by rape.

In Susan Brownmiller's seminal 1977 book *Against Our Will*, she documented how rape had been used as a weapon to destroy the enemy's morale in all

known wars. It occurred most frequently when victorious armies marched through conquered lands.

She noted the connection between rape and killing reflected in the slogan "double veterans" — soldiers who raped and killed women in the Vietnam war. Brownmiller's study indicated that gang rape is a normal aspect of war and men who rape in war are not psychopaths but "ordinary".

?@! a pullquote in Roman with rules above and below, four lines deep

mary Joes" made unordinary by entry into the most exclusive male-only club in the world.

She argued that victory in arms brings group power undreamed of in civilian life. It is for this reason that depicting rape as a war crime is so vital.

The silence regarding rape in war was broken in the 1990s by the presence of an active women's move-

ment which publicised the mass rapes of Muslim and Serbian women during the war in Bosnia. An international movement developed to have rape declared a war crime by the Geneva Convention. Reports of forcible impregnation of thousands of women, mostly Muslims by Serbian soldiers as a form of ethnic cleansing, caused outrage in the West.

A European Commission report estimated that 20,000 women had been victims of "organised" rape in Bosnia, while Muslim and Croat sources claimed the numbers were far greater.

The United Nations Commission investigated the rapes in 1993. At the larger women's clinic of Zagreb, they found 119 cases of pregnancy resulting from rape.

Rape camps and forced brothels were discovered where women and girls were raped day after day, many in front of their children.

Hundreds of women were held like animals, threatened with death if they resisted. The United Nations tribunal has made a landmark decision.

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A village in Russia's Chukotka peninsula, where council workers who have not been paid for three years are on hunger strike. PHOTOGRAPH BY OTTO POHL.

Hunger turns to revolt in Russia's frozen desert

With a crisis budget in Moscow, James Meek in Pevek finds starvation in the Arctic far north

IN LATE November, in the long evening of the 40-day polar night now shrouding their condemned village, Igor Mikhailovsky, Slava Rybin and nine other council workers lay down to starve.

Turning hunger into protest was a formality. They had worked without pay for more than three years, and when their bosses began trimming the trickle of food keeping them and their families alive, they lost the last reason to keep clocking on.

"We're not really on hunger strike," said Mr Mikhailovsky. "We've been hungry for a long time. The only difference is we're not working any more."

Like tens of thousands of others, they came voluntarily to the Arctic wasteland of the Chukotka peninsula, just west of Alaska, and in theory they are free to leave. But less and less distinguishes them from the Stalin-era convicts who founded their bleak settlements.

Like the slave labourers of the 1930s, they increasingly work for food not money. Like the political prisoners whose

lives were casually expended in the utopian cause of making the Arctic bloom, they are trapped in a frozen, unforgiving land, cut off by poverty, red tape and indifference.

The enormity of Russia's Arctic problem puts a harsh perspective on the government's crisis budget, approved by the cabinet and presented to parliament in Moscow yesterday. It is relatively tough, to please the International Monetary Fund in the hope that suspended loans will be resumed.

But the minister of finance, Mikhail Zadornov, acknowledged that it includes \$7.5 billion in foreign loans the government cannot even count on. Many people doubt whether the prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, let alone the Duma, will agree to keep the money supply tight when human lives on the periphery are wearing so thin.

The hunger-striking council workers maintain an essential services, such as the central heating system, in the settlement of Apapellino, a cluster of houses and blocks of flats around the airport serving the Arctic port of Pevek.

The advent of market forces and the cost of sustaining the community means Apapellino has to close, but the authorities have no money either to relocate the inhabitants or to pay them. The people cannot leave because their homes are worth nothing and they cannot afford new ones in other parts of Russia. Their only leverage is the threat to turn off Apapellino's central heating — but that would condemn their own families to freeze in temperatures of -35C.

For two years the council has staved off confrontation by offering the workers an emporium, a monthly food ration arranged through the local shop against future wages: 2lb of rice, 2lb of peas, 2lb of sugar, 4lb of flour, 4lb of meat, and 1lb of salted fish, plus bread. Some households of three or four have been subsisting on this alone, without the means to buy clothes, soap or toothpaste. After the financial crisis hit Russia in August, even this allowance slipped.

"They were carrying out an experiment," said Mr Rybin, a furnace operator. "Every month they reduced the rations. They lowered them to the point where we couldn't live any more on peas and rice."

The hunger strikers — eight men and three women — are growing weaker. One man has been taken to hospital with a condition made worse by malnutrition. The men and women live in two separate, stuffy rooms in a barrack-like block near the airport.

"The food they give us isn't enough," sobbed one of the women, Valentina Vaidikha. "We don't have any butter or tea. My son has a baby boy, aged one, and he's hungry. My son's hungry, too, and his wife's pregnant."

Pevek was founded in 1987, when Stalin's power of life and death turned the ravages of the polar explorers Otto Schmidt into reality. Schmidt told a British Stalinist sympathiser of plans to grow wheat in the Arctic. "People believe that the Arctic is wasteland, incapable of development, useless to mankind, a frozen desert," he said. "They are utterly wrong. The cold is no obstacle against human habitation."

Once the Gulag generation had built the Arctic communities, they were peopled by migrants attracted by high wages and enormous state expenditure. Instead of mining Chukotka's rich seams of gold with rotting shift workers, entire families were shipped in, and everything from kindergartens to greenhouses built to cater for them.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, partly caused by the burden of supporting the far



north, has left the northerners stranded.

Pevek has an esplanade and a hotel. But the sea is a frozen sheet, crossed by occasional foraging polar bears. Last month a nuclear-powered icebreaker barely managed to batter a channel through to the docks for a consignment of diesel oil to keep the town from freezing.

There are no roads or railways out of Pevek. Once home to 12,000 people, now with only 5,000, it has no cinemas or theatres. Going out means donning a space-suit-like assembly of hats, coats and layered clothing. In minutes exposed flesh can turn white with the first burn of frostbite.

Those who were able have already packed up and gone, leaving ever poorer Russians, many of them pensioners, disabled and single-parent families, cringing on to waiting lists for the few free flats in central Russia the state provides each year.

Larissa Kozar, head of Pevek's social security office, said: "We all came to work temporarily. I've lived here temporarily for 21 years."

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Nicaragua sues tobacco giants

Mark Tran in New York

TOBACCO companies are facing a legal onslaught from foreign countries seeking compensation for the costs of treating smoking-related illnesses, following their \$206 billion (£124 billion) settlement with US states.

Nicaragua yesterday filed suit in Puerto Rico against 11 US cigarette makers including Philip Morris, British American Tobacco/B&T Industries and Brown & Williamson. In May, Guatemala lodged a similar claim and Brazil is also expected to follow suit with a claim for around \$33 billion.

Julio Centeno Gomez, attorney general of Nicaragua, where a quarter of the four million population are smokers, said: "Nicotine consumption

is like a permanent Hurricane Mitch plague on our country. We want to prevent tobacco companies from profiting at our expense."

Nicaragua and Guatemala have engaged Texas law firm, Fleming, Hovenkamp & Grayson. Their first hurdle is to persuade the US courts that they have jurisdiction in foreign cases.

"There has yet to be such a case," said Mark Gottlieb, a lawyer specialising in tobacco legislation. "But there is no reason under US law why a foreign nation cannot come into a US court if the defendant is American."

"Since the states' case took off like wildfire, countries are looking at the possibility of making claims as they are in a remarkably similar position."

informative:

First Direct Base Rate

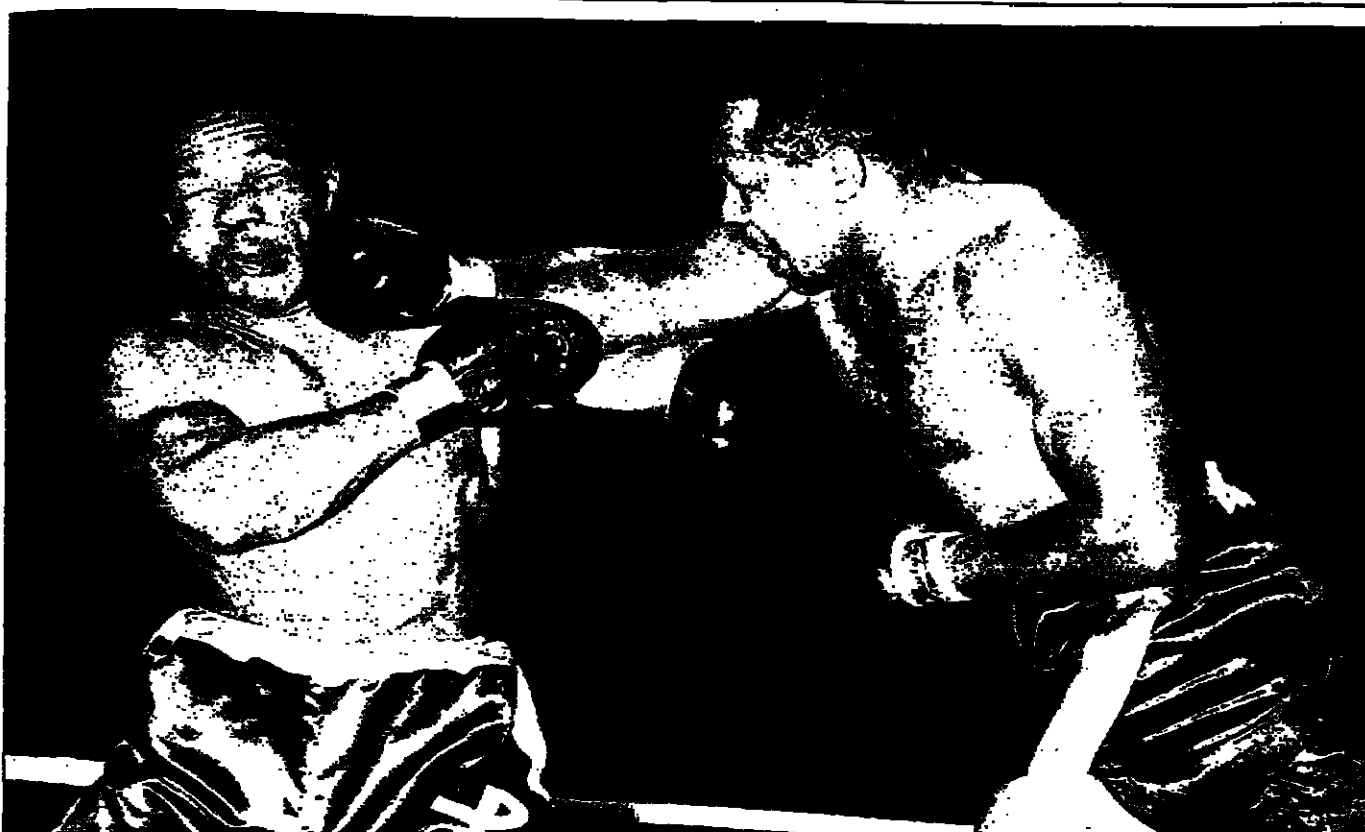
With effect from 10 December 1998, First Direct Base Rate has been decreased by 0.50% from 6.75% p.a. to 6.25% p.a.

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Archie Moore

Hit 'em hard and slow

ARCHIE MOORE, who could be a spectacular showman outside the ring but was a scientific strategy when he ducked under the ropes, has died at the age of 84. He fought more times, over a longer period, than any modern boxer. He began fighting professionally in 1936 and when he boxed an exhibition in Michigan in 1965 he had a record of 228 fights — which included 140 victories inside the distance. For years he felt hard done by in the manipulative world of professional fighting. It was not until he was 36 years old that he got his first world title fight, against Joey Maxim, and then only after a long publicity campaign involving letters to the leading American boxing writers declaring that Maxim was avoiding him. When they did meet at St Louis in December 1952, Moore won on points over 15 rounds. Moore was a superb defensive boxer, which is probably why his career took so long to

take off, and lasted, but equally why he was able to box about once a month for many years. His style was to let his opponents do the attacking, covered everything with his broad arms or using his feet to keep out of trouble. Then, when he saw the signs that his opponent was getting tired, he increased his work rate and forced the fight in his favour. His training regime was advanced so far as boxing gym-work was concerned, and the reputation of press-ups — past the 200 mark — brought him the sort of upper body strength needed for his style of fighting. He was in the early part of his career as a middleweight but, after suffering a perforated ulcer in 1940, he dropped to something close to eight stone. He was fighting in Australia at the time and later claimed he developed the ability to put on weight and lose it by copying the eating habits of aborigines, who, he claimed, merely sucked the juices of meat but never digested the fibre. All this was part of the myst

terry which Moore — known in the ring as "the Mongoose" — liked to promote. He held the light heavyweight title for 10 years, defending it successfully against Max Baer, Harold Johnson (twice) and, among others, Yolande Pompey, but his ambition to take the heavyweight crown remained unfulfilled. Moore was born Archie Lee Wright. After his parents separated, soon after his birth, he was brought up in St Louis by an aunt and uncle, and took their surname. When he did not feel that governing bodies, boxing promoters, or his many managers were treating him fairly, he was outspoken about the injustice. Once, when he refused to defend his title — and was threatened with being stripped of it — he appealed to the United Nations. His most public campaign about being badly treated came in 1954, when he thought that Rocky Marciano was trying to avoid him. The letter-writing technique was used so, at a cost of about US\$50,000 was a "wanted" poster campaign in the 19th-century style of law enforcement in the West. They met on May 16, 1955, at the New York Yankee Stadium before a crowd of more than 60,000 — generating nearly a million dollars. Moore put the champion down for a brief count early on and lasted nine rounds before he took three explosive shots and, although he was limping back on to his feet at the count of eight, his legs gave way. The following year he came to London and the British public saw him in the ring for the first time. He was not the drawing fighter he might have been. His fight with Pompey was dreary to the point of boring for eight rounds, with Moore doing no more than he needed to do to win. He was a crowd getting restive Jack Hart, the referee, had the temerity to warn both world champion and challenger that they were in danger of disqualification if they did not liven up the action. Moore understood and in the 10th round ripped into Pompey with shots which left the challenger a shambling shell of a fighter. Moore continued his adventures in the heavyweight division when Marciano retired, fighting Floyd Patterson for the vacant championship at the Chicago Stadium in November 1956, but was knocked out in the fifth round. Watching from the wings the old fighter's publicity gimmicks and stunts was a young professional with a brash attitude — Cassius Clay; in what was like the battle of the sexes in the ring they met in Los Angeles in November, 1962, and the old master was given a lesson from the young man, who knocked him out in four rounds. For Moore this was really the end of his serious boxing career; for the man now known as Muhammad Ali it was the beginning of an even greater one. The previous year in the final defence of his light heavyweight title in Madison Square Garden, New



Punchline... Moore (above) on the way to retaining his world light heavyweight championship against Yolande Pompey in London in 1956; and (above) in training in Berkshire before the fight

Eprime Eshag

Keynes's Iranian pupil

THE brilliant Iranian economist, Eprime Eshag, who has died aged 80, was first spotted by John Maynard Keynes. He spent the largest part of his life as a fellow and tutor at Wadham College, Oxford, retiring in 1986, but he continued to work for the university's Institute of Economic Statistics. He was also a visiting professor in Buenos Aires, Canberra and Beijing, and field work took him to the Indian sub-continent, Thailand and the Philippines. He served as a consultant to various Iranian banks and, despite a dispute in the Congo in 1960 with the then United Nations secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld, in the early 1980s he became senior consultant to the UN director-general in preparation for the north-south dialogue. Eshag was only a few months old when his father, an Assyrian Christian preacher, fled with his family to escape from the massacre of Assyrians by invading Turkish troops. They returned to their Iranian village from Russia when the boy was seven. He went for his secondary education to Tehran, where he was influenced by Dr Taghi Arani, who was later killed in prison for being a Marxist. Eshag came top of the class of all the Tehran students sitting for the baccalaureate, and also top of the 600 candidates applying for a scholarship to study accountancy in London. Once here, in 1936, he also enrolled as an external London University economics student, graduating with honours in 1942, and shortly after passing the Institute of Chartered Accountants' finals with distinction. He continued with graduate studies at the London School of Economics, then evacuated to Cambridge, where he was part of the end-of-war radical student ferment. Iran was at least as turbulent when Eshag was able to return in 1946, with the Soviet Union stimulating separatism in Azerbaijan and financing the left-wing Tudeh Party. His future seemed set. Abul Hasan Eshag, the National Bank of Iran's formidable head, had been told by Keynes that Iran had a brilliant economist in "a daring young man called Eshag, who has criticised my theory on one or two points, but is not afraid". Thus did Eshag accept a high post in the bank. Despite this, his return was not wholly happy. Encountering one of us, Andrew Roth, in the company of a half-Persian, half-Russian young man, he burst out, half-mockingly, about how unhappy he was. In Britain he had had lots of girlfriends; but in his native Tehran he could hardly find an attractive woman in its predominantly Muslim society willing to go out with an Assyrian Christian. Having become accus-



Eshag... unrepentant

And Monetary Policies. They were multiply translated, including into Chinese and Japanese. He also composed music to be sung in Assyrian, a language he retained along with Persian, Turkish, Russian, Armenian and French. "I die an unrepentant Keynesian socialist," he said. Eshag's last words, to an Iranian friend, hours before he died of cancer, were in Persian: "Ya Hagh", meaning "Oh, Goodness". "Oh, God" or "Oh, Truth". As a researcher after truth, he probably meant the last. He leaves his wife, Linda (nee Lewis). Eshag's last words, to an Iranian friend, hours before he died of cancer, were in Persian: "Ya Hagh", meaning "Oh, Goodness". "Oh, God" or "Oh, Truth". As a researcher after truth, he probably meant the last. He leaves his wife, Linda (nee Lewis). Eshag's last words, to an Iranian friend, hours before he died of cancer, were in Persian: "Ya Hagh", meaning "Oh, Goodness". "Oh, God" or "Oh, Truth". As a researcher after truth, he probably meant the last. He leaves his wife, Linda (nee Lewis).

Ebrahim Golestan and Andrew Roth

Eprime Eshag, economist, born November 6, 1918; died November 24, 1998

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: Capability Cuthbert grew up a few miles from where we live, his generation trained in the large estates under men who worked the soil without mechanical aids. Their skills were nurtured by experience and hard work. Instant gardening, like instant cooking, is suited to the modern lifestyle; I try to resist and plant

not just for ourselves but for our grandchildren. One of our senior citizens showed me a dismembered hedgehog found under a hedge. "A fox is to blame for this," he sighed. He is right, foxes frequent the village and I gave up free-range hens with a heavy heart because they didn't stand a chance. But foxes are part of our ecology and I like to watch one cross our field when I draw the bedroom curtains. The travelling shop, which

Alan Wilson

Moderate in the mines

It was in 1979 that Alan Wilson, who has died aged 72, was born in the north-east and started work as an apprentice surveyor with Dorman Long in Ferryhill, County Durham. While pursuing his career as a surveyor he witnessed some of the more dubious practices of the private coal industry and was a keen supporter of nationalisation in 1947. One immediate problem was merging the management structures of the old companies. Alan was a keen supporter of the establishment of the management association to protect staff, and saw one of its first objectives as to merge many disparate payment systems. Having progressed to a senior NCB position, his involvement in management trade unionism led eventually to his 1970 appointment as a full-time official. Although there had been

to work in the absence of a negotiated settlement. Alan was born in the north-east and started work as an apprentice surveyor with Dorman Long in Ferryhill, County Durham. While pursuing his career as a surveyor he witnessed some of the more dubious practices of the private coal industry and was a keen supporter of nationalisation in 1947. One immediate problem was merging the management structures of the old companies. Alan was a keen supporter of the establishment of the management association to protect staff, and saw one of its first objectives as to merge many disparate payment systems. Having progressed to a senior NCB position, his involvement in management trade unionism led eventually to his 1970 appointment as a full-time official. Although there had been



Wilson... consensual

Death Notices

ANNE, Mrs. Mary, 80, died December 10, 1998, at home, 10, Riverside, Chesham, Bucks. Buried in the family grave, St. Peter's Church, Chesham. Tel. 0181 881 5353.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR visit to the vaults of the Bank of England, page 2, G2, December 9, we said that two Nazi gold bars were almost certainly minted from the teeth and jewellery of concentration camp victims. The Bank says that, in fact, the provenance of the two bars is unusually well tracked, with the result that the Bank can be confident that these particular bars contain no Holocaust victims' gold. The bars were not melted during the second world war but were almost certainly taken from the Belgian government's private reserves and re-stamped with Nazi markings to hide their origin.

DR JOHN WELLS, of the faculty of economics & politics, University of Cambridge, has asked us to point out that in his letter, published on page 23, December 9, under the heading, Clare Short's poor

Birthdays

Anna Carteret, actress, 58; Prof Ronald Dworkin, philosopher of law, 57; Sir Robert Fellowes, private secretary to the Queen, 57; Dr Betty Kershaw, chief nursing officer, St John Ambulance Brigade, 55; Andrew Lansley, Conservative MP, 52; Brenda Lee, country singer, 54; Cliff Michelmore, broadcaster, 79; Rita Moreno, singer, actress, 67; Steve Nicol, footballer, 37; Dorinda Outram, historian of the French Revolution, 45; Nigel Pivaro, actor, 38; David Pownall, television pioneer, 66; Carlo Ponti, film director, 85; Patrick Reynolds, stained glass designer, 73; Alexander Solzhenitsyn, writer, human rights campaigner, 80; Sarah Spencer, civil libertarian, 46; Jean-Louis Trintignant, actor, 68; McCoy Tyner, jazz pianist, composer, 60; Diana Wallis, artistic director, 53; Marco Pierre White, chef, 37; Phil Woolas, Labour MP, 39.

Interest rate change

Allied Irish Bank (GB) announces that with effect from close of business on 10 December 1998 its Base Rate was decreased from 6.75% to 6.25% pa.

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£25,000 - £99,999	3.12%	2.50%
£2,000 - £24,999	2.62%	2.10%
£100 - £1,999	2.25%	1.80%
HIGH INTEREST BUSINESS ACCOUNT (Fixed rate account)		
£250,000 +	4.87%	3.90%
£100,000 - £249,999	4.75%	3.80%
£25,000 - £99,999	4.50%	3.60%
£10,000 - £24,999	4.00%	3.20%
£2,000 - £9,999	3.25%	2.60%
CLIENTS' PREMIUM ACCOUNT		
£1 million +	4.25%	3.40%
£250,000 - £999,999	4.12%	3.30%
£100,000 - £249,999	4.00%	3.20%
£25,000 - £99,999	3.62%	2.90%
£10,000 - £24,999	3.37%	2.70%
BARCLAYS COMMUNITY ACCOUNT (An interest-bearing current account for clubs, charities, churches and societies. No minimum balance.)		
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£5,000 - £9,999	1.12%	0.90%
£0 - £4,999	0.87%	0.70%
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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

SINCE the inception of the Pinochet saga, it has been impossible to discern the Prime Minister's personal feelings, since he has hidden behind the cloak of sub judice. We are intrigued, then, to hear of events in Westminster on Wednesday afternoon. Most Labour MPs got the news of Jack Straw's decision via their pagers, in a message from chief whip Ann Taylor which added the instruction to ministers on no account to comment (sub judice once again). This sparked raucous celebrations in one half of the Commons tea room, the other half seething quietly. However, one Labour MP forsook his cup of char in favour of skulking about outside Mr Tony's room at the very moment the news came through just after 4 pm. "There was," he tells us, "loud and sustained cheering from within." He cannot swear that Mr Tony was in at the time, but he usually is at that time of the week since Prime Minister's Questions has just finished, and we prefer to believe that he was there to lead not only the cheering but also a vigorous Conga.

CELEBRATIONS clearly continued long after tea time on Wednesday. At dinner, the member's dining room ran clean out of Chilean red.

WHILE he visits all the 22 local authorities of Wales, Alun Michael insists that this tour (paid for out of party funds) is under the auspices of a Labour devolution campaign; and has nothing whatever to do with his campaign to become Welsh leader. Things are going splendidly. Last Friday, for example, the turnout for a Q&A session in Newport was 25. Tonight the Welsh Secretary visits Torfaen... and the fact that he is dragging Mo Mowlam along with him is, once again, absolutely nothing to do with boosting his personal popularity in the quest for the leadership. I hope that's crystal clear.

I AM amazed by the versatility of Simon Kelner. By day the editor of the Independent, at night Simon is branching out into showbusiness. He is now the leader of the Chipolatas, a troupe of Jewish strippers whose performance at the Full Monty routine at a charity show in Watford featured in Wednesday's

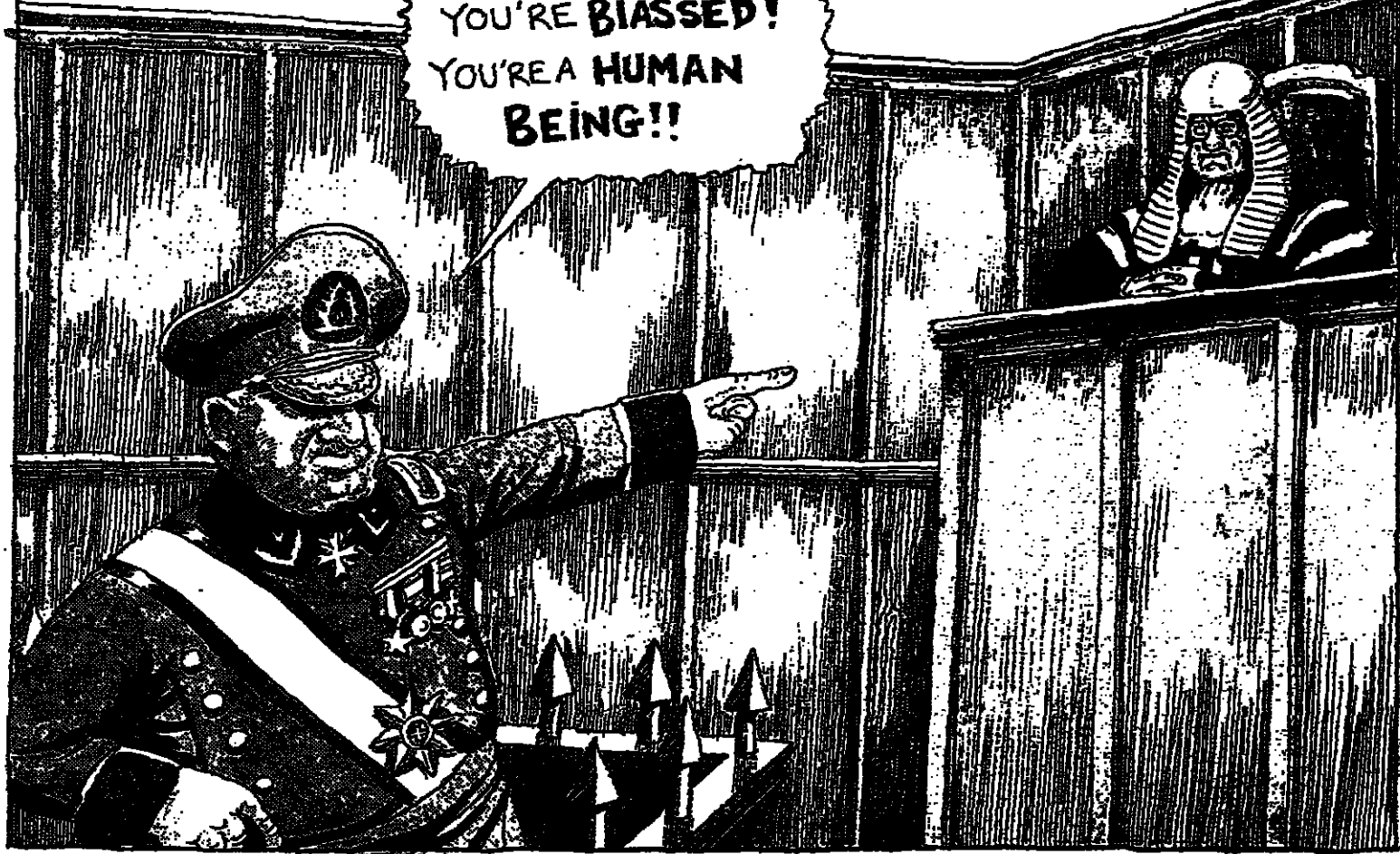


London Evening Standard. Simon is the one at the front.

DISTRESSING to relate, the seasonal spirit has so far failed to infect Paul Johnson. When my colleague Simon Bowers rang him yesterday to ask for a Christmas message, he found my sane and rational friend in brusque and insolent mood. Far be it from me to lecture so devout and virtuous a Christian about the meaning of Our Lord's life on earth. However, he might care to reflect upon Jesus's strictures about turning the other cheek. Or more aptly, perhaps, in the case of this exceedingly naughty boy, having the other cheek turned.

FROM New York comes news that UNSCOM is imaginatively widening its efforts to track down Saddam Hussein's concealed weapons of mass destruction. The UN Security Commission has been receiving correspondence, we learn, from an unnamed medium on the South Coast of Bahrain who is getting to help them. "I am getting images," she reports, "of long, shiny objects in the caves of Southern Iraq." The crisis, it seems, may be drawing to an unexpected close.

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Shame on the Birmingham Six for bringing this gold-digging lawsuit

Alan Rusbridger



SHORTLY before the last election a now-forgotten millionaire Conservative backbencher by the name of David Evans visited a school in his constituency. During the course of an interview with some sixth formers he burdened himself of a few strikingly unpleasant observations.

He advocated hanging or castration for "black bastards" who were guilty of rape. He referred to his Labour opponent in Weylyn and Hatfield as a "single girl [with] three bastard children". And, challenged by the pupils about his views on capital punishment, he disputed that the Bridgewater Three and Birmingham Six were truly innocent.

Of the Birmingham Six's innocence he said: "If you believe that you'll believe anything... You think the Birmingham Six have killed hundreds of people before they were caught? Unknown to Mr Evans, one of his audience tape-recorded these remarks and sent them off to Anglia Television. They were picked up by several newspapers.

I don't suppose any editor gave the matter a second thought. Here was a man who expected shortly to be re-elected by his constituents. It seemed a basic right of the voters to know their present and putative MP was an unpleasant creep. At the Guardian we put the story on the front page under the headline "Into the gutter". There was a further sub-heading which read: "Fury at Tory MP's crude remarks to children on race, women and justice". I doubt that a single Guardian reader sympathised with anything Evans said, believed anything he said or imagined that the paper endorsed any of his views.

Within two months David Evans was an ex-MP. The voters of Weylyn decided they preferred Melanie Johnson, mother of the three "bastard children". It was a just result, and the media had done its little bit to ensure that the electorate had been able to make an informed decision. Time to move on.

But not quite. A little while afterwards the Guardian received letters from two firms of Dublin lawyers. The first announced that they represented the Birmingham Six and that this was "the gravest case of libel this firm has ever had to deal with". What did we propose to do? We wrote back and proposed that we print an immediate statement making it clear that the men were, of course, innocent of the crimes of which David Evans had accused them and, of course, the Guardian did not endorse his repulsive views. Not good enough, said the lawyers. Their clients wanted "a measure of monetary compensation". We gently probed to see what sort of compensation they had in mind. It became clear that, by the time we had paid them and their lawyers, we would be parting with a sum well into six figures. A big price tag for keeping the voters of Weylyn informed.

But there was something else that rankled. The lawyers' letters spoke ringingly of the "hatred and contempt" shown

to their clients by the British press. Right through their ordeal most of Fleet Street had been unrelentingly hostile to the cause of the Birmingham Six. The lawyers would accordingly rely on "express malice". You couldn't quarrel with much of that. Except that there was one British newspaper which — throughout the long, dark days in which the Six languished forgotten in prison — did keep something of a flame alive. That paper was the Guardian.

There is a further irony: we could have done more, sooner, to prove the innocence of the Birmingham Six, but we were held back — by the libel laws. Any suggestion that the police had rigged the evidence against them would have been met with a shower of writs. So there is a real sense in which the libel laws were responsible for the Six spending many unnecessary years behind bars. Despite these obstacles, Guardian reporters persisted. Peter Chippindale was the first to take an interest in the men's case at a time when most didn't want to know. He attended every day of the trial in Lancaster and was approached by the families for support.

CHRIS Mullin, who played a crucial role in eventually proving the men's innocence, wrote in his book *Error of Judgement*: "Only two journalists took the view that there was anything more to this trial than met the eye — David Brazil of the Irish Press and Peter Chippindale of the Guardian... They were the only journalists to make contact with the prisoners' wives and their reporting benefitted from a note of scepticism... which was wholly absent from most other accounts of the trial."

After the trial Chippindale continued to dig into the case. He broke, and followed through, the story of how the men were beaten in Winson Green prison. This was not a popular campaign for a British newspaper to run. Hugh Callaghan's autobiography acknowledges: "It wasn't always easy for journalists... Reporters who wrote sympathetic pieces about the Six 'too soon' would be to pay up. A trial could be drawn out and

hugely expensive. We could probably hammer out some kind of quiet deal. But how would that serve our readers? The logic would be inevitable: the next time an unpleasant MP started spouting repugnant views we might well be reluctant to risk printing them. You, the voters, would not know them. A little bit of the interchange of democratic life in this country would have died.

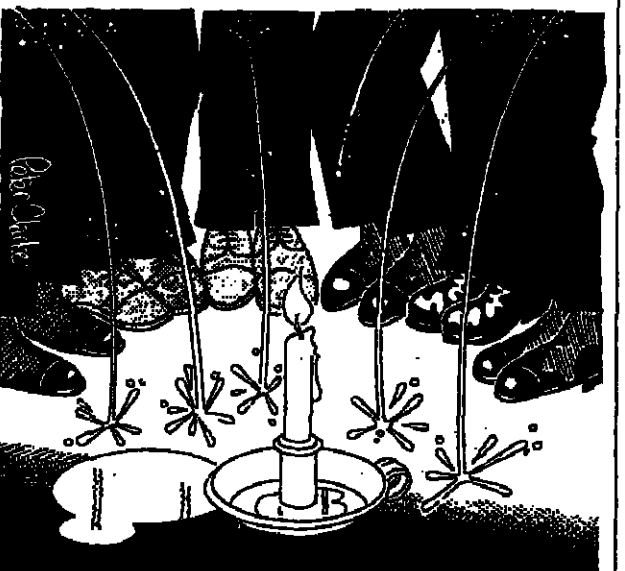
When Chippindale left the Guardian in 1979 he handed over his entire dossier to Chris Mullin. Mullin's work was to prove decisive in proving the men's innocence. But the work of other Guardian reporters and writers should not be forgotten — including David Leigh, Paul Foot (then on the Mirror), John Mullin, David Pallister and Duncan Campbell.

When the men were finally released they invited Chippindale to the "official" celebration. Both he and the paper were effusively thanked. He was repeatedly told that without it the campaign would never have succeeded. Hugh Callaghan was kind enough to single out the Guardian's role in his autobiography: "Most of the papers were awful, hardly readable. Peter Chippindale in the Guardian was an exception: he gave accurate reports and was sceptical."

The Six have evidently not entirely forgotten this paper's work on their behalf. Their lawyers have the grace to admit that the Guardian has a "generally good reputation in relation to this and other miscarriages of justice cases". One of the Six even offered to drop the case at one stage if we covered his costs. But the others still apparently want their "measure of monetary compensation".

The action is more cynical still: the men are suing in the Dublin Courts rather than risk an action in London, despite the fact that the Guardian sells only 3,000 copies a day in the Irish Republic — less than 1 per cent of our daily circulation. The lawyers call it "forum shopping". The lawyers will have told them that Irish juries are (or were, until the recent Slab Murphy case) famous for inflicting punishment on British newspapers.

The simplest thing, I suppose, would be to pay up. A trial could be drawn out and



Alan Rusbridger is the editor of the Guardian

The frightened murderers in Chile are now making threats

Creatures in the murk

Isabel Hilton



IF THE chorus of Pinochet supporters, led in this country by the immortal duo of Norman Lamont and Margaret Thatcher, is to be believed, the sky is about to fall. If you are of a nervous disposition, I hope you are safely indoors. The premise on which this prediction of disaster is based is two-fold: firstly that commerce with Chile will wither and die and, more importantly, that democracy in Chile will crumble under the strain imposed by further legal proceedings against the general.

But the truth is that the evidence is sparse. Business in Chile, with the exception of the arms buyers who might be expected to take an ideological line, is as pragmatic as business anywhere. I find it unlikely that it plans to cut off its nose to save Pinochet's face. Which brings us to democracy.

How curious that it should be General Pinochet's admirers who shout most loudly about the threat to Chile's democracy. Chilean democracy used to be rather well thought of — unlike its neighbours, Chile enjoyed 40 years of uninterrupted democratic government until 1973, a record of which many Chileans were justifiably proud and which made the events of the Seventies and Eighties a matter not only of pain but of shame.

Now, we are told, General Pinochet should be thanked for "restoring" democracy to Chile. Since he overthrew it in the first place, you might think it was the least he could have done, but that is entirely the point either. The point that many Chileans argue, is that the democracy that the general gave to his grateful nation was a travesty of what had gone before.

As every Guardian reader must know by now, General Pinochet rewrote the constitution and gave himself and his minions an amnesty for the crimes of the dictatorship, stitching Chile forever, he thought, into the authoritarian straitjacket he had designed. What he had bargained for was a far more sinister thing: a dictatorship of the police and the nation, they recognised that it was a better deal than continuing de facto rule: they took it and have lived with it, with as much dignity as they could muster, ever since. But they knew, of course, that this settlement left many bills unpaid.

That it should be a Spanish judge who finally presented those bills was something that few would have guessed, even then. When a Chilean delegation went to Rome to support the treaty that may, one day, establish an international court of justice, if the court makes it into being, it will enshrine the principles of international jurisdiction for certain crimes, just as the steady accretion of conventions and treaties that have followed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have done. The Chilean government supported that principle, choosing to sign the treaty on the highly symbolic date of September 11, the anniversary of the 1973 coup. But for the time being, there is that awkward matter of how the bill for the past should be paid.

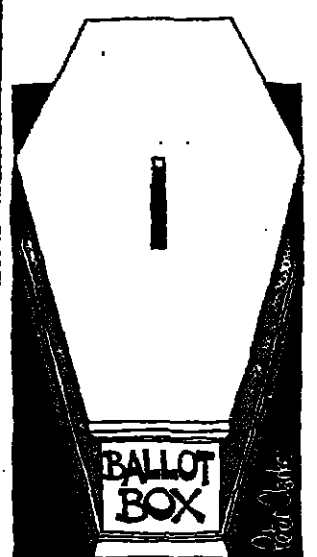
LORD Lamont would have us believe that there is no account to settle. The Chilean government has tried to persuade us, belatedly, that it is ready to pay both encouragement us to imagine that they speak for all Chileans. But they do not, for instance, speak for Carmen Hertz.

Carmen Hertz was a senior member of the team who represented Chile in the Rome negotiations. Until Pinochet's arrest, she was the chief legal adviser to the Chilean foreign ministry. When her government came out in defence of Pinochet, Carmen Hertz resigned; her husband, Carlos

Berguer, was one of Pinochet's victims. Berguer was a journalist. He was arrested in September 1973 and sentenced by a military tribunal to a term of 30 days imprisonment. Carmen represented her husband at his "trial" and is in a position to know, therefore, that there was no evidence against him. It was while he was serving his sentence that he was taken from the prison, tortured and murdered, only hours after she had visited him.

Carmen Hertz spent many years supporting, through legal work, the relatives of the disappeared and, when the dictatorship ended, she took up her post at the foreign ministry. Clearly she has every reason to support a return to democracy in Chile, so perhaps her assessment of what that democracy consists of is worth a little more attention than the views of Norman Lamont.

It was, in her view, perhaps the only possible bargain at the time, but that does not make it a good one. The right kept a stranglehold on constitutional change, something Chile's more democratically minded politicians could do little about. But she argues they went on to create an air of social and political tolerance of the crimes of the dictatorship that fatally wounded any hope of real reconciliation in Chile. The military high command who were involved in those crimes enjoyed not only impunity, but the usual privileges and immunities of their office. Not only were they not in jail, they were not even out of a job or off the invitation list: they were free to continue to impose their own version of events on the nation's memory. At best, for people like



The democracy he gave his nation was a travesty of what had gone before

Carmen Hertz, it was a step towards democracy but it had a morally rotten core. This, then, is the settlement that Lord Lamont would have us believe is gravely imperilled by General Pinochet's confinement on the Westworth estate. In deference to his opinion, let us examine it seriously. If the opinion of a Chilean society is taken into account, it is clear that General Pinochet is popular only with the extreme fringe. The overwhelming majority think he should answer for his deeds and none but the lonely fanatics would wish to sacrifice even Chile's compromised democracy in his defence.

This is not to say that Chile's politicians are not worried. But what are they worried about? They are worried that the extreme right will resort, as they have already begun to do, to death threats, even to selective assassination of people like Carmen Hertz, in order to intimidate the nation into continuing to support the no-account view of history. They know that beneath the surface of democracy there are creatures in the murk who regret nothing and are still prepared to try to blackmail any government that attempts to complete Chile's return to a democracy based on justice and the absence of fear.

They were always there. The difference is that now, they are frightened.

Guar

Carry on cutting

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Shark a

Bel littlejohn



Analysis The genetic code



Isabel Hilton
on Pinochet
12

British and American scientists make history today. **Tim Radford** reports how by taking a tiny worm to bits they have taken a giant step towards understanding the very stuff of human life

A new map of a (quite) close cousin

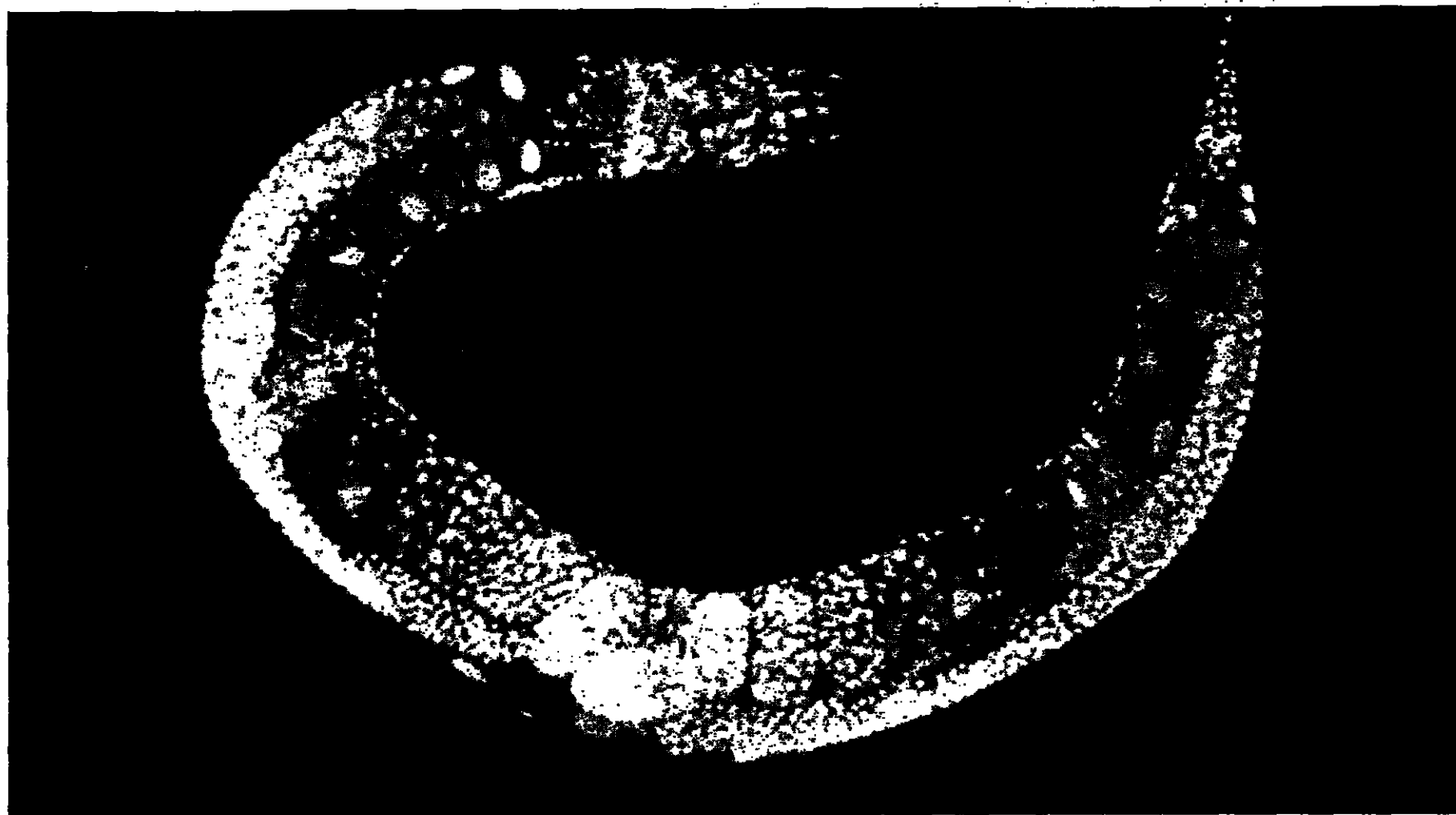
THEY brought a worm to bits. The nematode may be too small even to step on, but it is a giant leap for mankind all the same. The research matters for its own sake — four out of every five creatures on the planet is a nematode worm — and as a measure of the effort taken so far. But there is bigger game to be stalked and bagged, within the blueprint for a worm. The worm may be small, but it is the nearest organism to humans so far described. It is a milestone in the race to map the DNA sequences of mice, rats, rice, thalassid, zebrafish, chicken, pig and other useful complex creatures. And it is a kind of shortcut to the greatest prize of all: the 3 billion-letter alphabet that will spell out the 80,000 genes or so that describe what it is to be human.

That last should, if all goes well, be finished by 2003: a momentous date, exactly 50 years after James Watson and Francis Crick determined the structure of the double helix that supports the DNA code, the four-letter chemical alphabet that describes all life on the planet. Crick and Watson are still working as scientists. That is a measure of the speed of the achievement. The scale of the achievement is already enough to make even the achiever reel: new human genes are being identified, described, examined and even tinkered with almost every week. The sum of a creature's genes is called its genome. More than 40 nations have joined the Human Genome Organisation to complete the project, at a cost — a figure plucked from the air, because nobody knows how to do the accounting — of about \$3 billion.

The worm was turned to good account chiefly by a team from Washington University in St Louis and the Sanger Centre in Cambridge. *C. elegans* exists almost everywhere in the temperate world but the project started in Cambridge more than 30 years ago with some worms collected from decaying mushrooms in Bristol, although the systematic decision to sequence the entire genome was taken only in the eighties. Since then, Sanger scientists helped map the chromosomes of yeast; they are also working on fruit flies and pufferfish, chickens, tuberculosis, malaria and the little bacterium that delivers bubonic plague. This morning, in the American journal *Science*, the Sanger Centre's chief John Sulston and his colleagues announce the completion of the worm project. As they see it, it's both an end and a beginning.

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What is the Human Genome Project?

The project is a 15-year effort to map and sequence the 3 billion letters of the human genome. It is the largest scientific project ever undertaken. The project is led by the International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium, which includes scientists from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, China, India, and other countries. The project is funded by the US Department of Energy and the Human Genome Foundation.

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which play together in almost perfect harmony. But mice, chickens and humans march to the same harmonies: research into the genomes of yeasts, bacteria, worms and humans tells the same over and over again: all life on Earth is intimately related. If you can discover what makes a yeast or a worm tick, you have at least part of the answer to a human mystery. So each gene identified and catalogued is a prize for science.

The yeast scientists — a European consortium — have had a couple of years start. They already have a measure of the massive task ahead. "In all of these organisms we find we do not know on any level what between 40 and 60 per cent of the genes do. Sometimes we recognise them sometimes we don't. Even if you recognise them

because they are similar to genes in other organisms, it doesn't necessarily tell you what their role in the organism is," says Professor Stephen Oliver, of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. But even yeast has genes that pass on human afflictions. One yeast gene produces a protein doctors recognise: it is called frataxin. In humans, it is produced by a gene that is linked with Friedreich's ataxia, a neurodegenerative condition which makes the legs unsteady. "Well, yeast doesn't have legs," says Professor Oliver. But yeast, being simple, can show exactly what the gene does: you can swap yeast and human genes and watch the effect at work in a laboratory dish.

The worm will add to that value. Some worm genes announced themselves almost immediately, in computer analysis. Because DNA is a code, you can use sophisticated algorithms to "spot" meaning. Other genes have been spotted swiftly by comparison with sequences from other animals. The next trick is to see what they do, how they work, and the instructions that set the genetic machinery in operation will also be coded in the DNA sequence. The worm will be a kind of data resource for biologists for decades to come. It is beginning to answer questions about the machinery of programmed cell death, and therefore about cancer. It is beginning to answer questions about why cells grow old and die.

"The picture one has to have is that all sorts of things drop out immediately," says Dr Sulston. "Most of the sequence has been out for years now and has provided lots of starting points for researchers. There are lots of new research projects starting up: it has stimulated a whole field of biology. There will be far more value yet to be extracted from it than we can see at this point."

pay off handsomely in terms of public health. The better it is that people who die relatively early in life of heart failure, or stroke, or cancer, die because of their own peculiar mix of genes: evolution has a way of keeping people alive until they are ready to procreate and rear their young. Then, so to speak, it loses interest. But genes are only half the story: the environment in which the genes survive or fail is the other half. The knowledge of the human blueprint is already beginning to provide useful information about the lifestyles and diets that tend to healthy maturity. It is also beginning to present insurance companies and health authorities with some ethical headaches: if someone has "bad" genes, why would you want to accept them as a risk. If they have terrific genes, why should they pay your premiums?

Right now, it is the worm's turn in the limelight. It was small, bred fast and it was transparent: researchers could actually see what was going on in the worm. "It's simpler than a human, in terms of the range of organ structures, but it has a gut, it has muscle, it has skin and it has a nervous system," Dr Sulston says. "It's a wonderful test tube for biology: you can move things in there, and have them work, and look at them more closely. We haven't come to the end of something. We have come to the beginning of something."

Sources: (1) Science, December 11; information about the Human Genome Project: <http://www.ornl.gov/techResource/humanGenome/human.html> Researcher: Matthew Keating. Tim Radford is the Guardian's science editor.

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12/11/98

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Friday December 11 1998

Tomorrow: Vorsprung durch Grand Prix

Plus: Crossing the Atlantic

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Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
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FinanceGuardian

Decline and deflation

Home-loan rates tumble

Lee Stuart

HOMEBOWNERS have been given an early Christmas present with yesterday's 0.5 percentage point cut in the base rate, but the move will be seen as less festive by savers.

Halifax, Nationwide, Northern Rock and Abbey National were the first lenders to react to the news by reducing mortgage rates.

But the monetary policy committee's decision is bad news for savers, who outnumber borrowers by seven to one. Although the banks and building societies were coy about what effect yesterday's move will have on their savings rates, the average net rate is likely to fall to just over 3 per

cent, equal to the current inflation rate.

In the face of such paltry returns and with the likelihood that the base rates will continue to drop as the UK mimics EMU convergence rates, consumers may be tempted to dump deposit accounts and move into equities, particularly tracker funds, in spite of the FTSE's recent volatility.

This would be exceptionally bad timing for the Government, trying to give an upbeat message about saving in the run up to introducing the Individual Savings Account and the stakeholder pension.

Halifax spokesman Mark Hemmingsway said: "ISAs are designed to persuade people who may never have saved be-

What the rate changes mean to you

Amount of loan	Halifax mortgage payment (per £100,000)	Nationwide mortgage payment (per £100,000)	Northern Rock mortgage payment (per £100,000)	Abbey National mortgage payment (per £100,000)
£20,000	£272.25	£274.00	£275.00	£276.00
£30,000	£408.38	£411.00	£412.50	£414.00
£40,000	£544.50	£546.00	£547.50	£549.00
£50,000	£680.63	£681.00	£682.50	£684.00
£60,000	£816.75	£816.00	£817.50	£819.00
£70,000	£952.88	£951.00	£952.50	£954.00
£80,000	£1,088.99	£1,086.00	£1,087.50	£1,089.00
£90,000	£1,225.13	£1,221.00	£1,222.50	£1,224.00
£100,000	£1,361.25	£1,356.00	£1,357.50	£1,359.00

Based on interest only mortgage, assuming 20-year term, variable rate up to £200,000.

He says the Halifax will make an announcement at the end of December about its savings rate, with the cuts coming into force in early January. If, as expected, the bank

reduces its headline rate net of basic rate tax by half a percentage point, the new rate will be 3.1 per cent. The Halifax yesterday announced that its standard variable mortgage rate would fall in line with the base rate change, down to 7.7 per cent.

The mutual Nationwide is cutting its mortgage rate to 7.2 per cent, and Abbey National is cutting rates across its three lending tiers, taking its highest rate to 7.65 per cent on loans of less than £50,000.

In the case of the Halifax, the biggest lender in the UK, and Northern Rock, buyers or remortgagors borrowing £50,000 will pay around £24 a month less in interest with immediate effect, although established borrowers will have to

wait until the start of 1999 for relief. Nationwide moves on January 1 for all borrowers.

Alliance & Leicester, Bradford & Bingley and Cheltenham & Gloucester all said they expected to make an announcement within a week.

Prudential's new direct operation Egg, whose launch rate of 8 per cent gross is the market leader for savers, will drop its rate to 6.75 per cent gross after January 1.

Nick Deutsch, chief executive of broker First Mortgage, warned last night that mortgage rates might soon bottom out. "Even if base rates continue to decline, it will be difficult for mortgage rates to follow suit. We may be moving to a scenario where it is not viable to lower mortgages further."

Notebook

Bumpy ride ahead before soft landing



Alex Brummer

NOW we should be really worried. For the third month in a row the Bank of England's monetary policy committee has looked at the outlook for the UK economy and found it wanting.

As a result, the UK has now had the largest sequence of interest rate cuts in five years — cautious quarter-point in October, followed by a half-point in November and December to bring market rates down to 6.25 per cent. It is now a short canter to 5 per cent by the Budget.

target, rather than the upper and lower limit which is part of the European Central Bank mandate.

The symmetry of the Bank's 2.5 per cent inflation target, means that it has the flexibility to loosen the monetary strings when the economy weakens, as at present, and with deliberate speed.

The Europeans, whose recovery could yet be aborted by events in emerging markets, would appear to have no such luxury. Although the recent shaving of rates to 3 per cent throughout the euro-11 (with the exception of Italy) does suggest a system that is not entirely insensitive to slower growth and deflationary tendencies.

Back to the UK. Britain has now had a cut of 1.25 points in market rates to 6.25 per cent — the lowest level since the election of Tony Blair. But is this going to be enough to kick-start the economy? In much the same way as there were advocates of the shock increase last May, of a full point, to undo the fallings of Tony Blair in late 1996 and early 1997, there are advocates (like the FT's Lex column) of shock treatment now.

Certainly, quarter and half-point cuts are barely perceptible to the consumer, although they may be more helpful to the industrial and retail companies financing investment and stocks.

As far as the person on the street is concerned the arrival of the fixed-rate mortgage, a glory when rates are rising, means that the system is much less sensitive when falling. A half-point cut in mortgage rates for the average mortgage of £50,000 a year means a £24 saving per month that is new disposable income. But only for those with flexible rates.

Moreover, in much the same way as British consumers pay more for their motor vehicles than on the Continent as well as their food and liquor, so they do for their credit. In fact the charges made by UK credit card companies to consumers, are totally out of line with the market.

AT the leading provider Barclaycard the present charge is 21.9 per cent when borrowers are in that territory an interest rate cut hardly is likely to make much difference in terms of people's willingness to take on credit.

NatWest has responded to the Bank of England's latest move by trimming its credit card rates by 1.5 per cent to 21.4 per cent, basically matching the three reductions by the MPC in one shot, useful but ungenerous. Only the Co-op Bank, God bless them, has a credit card interest rate which is tied to base rates and quickly kicks in as an economic stabiliser.

As a tool to provide people with a brighter holiday season, the half-point cut in interest rates is better than could have been hoped for, but unlikely to stimulate any kind of high-street revival. Only bigger cuts can produce that and even they are ineffectual given the uncompetitive charging patterns of so many high street institutions.

As the Bank spells out in its statement, the global and the UK outlooks are deteriorating sharply. The after-shocks of East Asia, Japan, Russia and the global market problems are no longer a distant thunder but have moved directly overhead. The idea that somehow the service sector of the economy could be sheltered from the recession in manufacturing has gone up in a puff of smoke.

The downward revision in third quarter growth in UK gross domestic product was already under the monetary policy committee's spotlight at its last meeting. But matters have moved on since then, with business surveys, closely followed by the Bank's economists, registering a likely drop in output in the fourth quarter and the first quarter of next year.

In other words a recession projection, despite the pre-Budget report's forecast of 1 to 1.5 per cent growth next year. In particular, the Bank is certain to have been influenced by the negative CBI and Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply service sector surveys.

There also have been steady profit warnings from the high street.

What began at Marks and Spencer has rippled through the sector, with Kingfisher (at the lower end of the market) the notable exception. But even it is predicting a "competitive" low margin and difficult holiday period.

Then there is inflation. The East-Asia problem was always going to bring down the price of imports from electronic goods to cars, speeded in the UK case by the strong pound. But most importantly the problems of emerging markets and Japan have exerted a strong downward pressure on commodity prices. The collapse of the oil price through \$10-a-barrel this week is emblematic of the deflation spreading through the global economy. There are few goods which are insensitive to energy prices.

THE retreat of inflation makes one glad that the Government and the Bank have a central inflation

Royal Doulton to axe 1,200 workers



The Royal Doulton factory in Stoke-on-Trent in its heyday. Now the firm is struggling with falling sales

PHOTOGRAPH: HORACE WETTON

Firm takes long Christmas break in attempt to cut £20m costs

Lisa Buckingham

ROYAL Doulton, the stricken fine china group, is to axe 1,200 jobs at least 1,000 of which will be in Britain — with half losing their livelihoods this month.

It is the third swathe of job losses from the group which is struggling to contain costs with the economic crisis in the Far East, one of its most impor-

tant trading regions, as well as the impact of the strong pound on other export markets. Earlier this year, Royal Doulton said several hundred jobs would disappear with the decision to close two factories. The previous summer another 300 posts had been axed.

To try to cut costs by more than £20 million a year, Royal Doulton is also bringing forward the deadline to close its plant at St Mary's in Stoke-on-

Trent which employs 500 people. Most of its UK ceramics factories will close early for Christmas and not re-open until late after the New Year. Earlier attempts to improve profitability by introducing a four-day week failed.

In a statement the company admitted it makes too many products, holds too much stock, has spent too much on production capacity and too little on selling and marketing.

The gloomy announcement follows a string of large-scale job losses from other major UK corporates, making it one of the worst weeks for em-

ployment and increasing pressure on the MPC, despite yesterday's half per cent cut in base rates. On Wednesday alone, drugs group Zeneca said it would sack 1,000 as a result of its merger with Astra. Smith & Nephew cut 480 while Alstom is to axe 500 jobs.

The pressure on Royal Doulton does not look likely to lift. It admitted yesterday that, in the current climate for retail spending, its sales next year are likely to fall below those of 1994. In the opening 11 months of this year sales were 5 per cent down on 1997 at £205 million and in the cru-

cial month of December they are also expected to lag behind last Christmas.

In addition to the job losses, the cost of which will contribute to a one-off charge of £45 million, Royal Doulton is restructuring its remaining businesses so its five product divisions will reduce to two: a collectables division which will include all figure and novelty ranges, Calithness Glass, Minton and Royal Crown Derby and a tabletop division which will include tableware, crystal stemware as well as hotel and airline products.

The group intends to shut

some of its poorer performing retail stores and will consolidate three satellite warehouses into one. In all, about 950 manufacturing and warehouse jobs will be lost and some 250 administrative, support, commercial and retail positions will go.

Its shares slumped by more than 12 per cent to their lowest level of 73p and long suffering investors also learned that because of the costs of the reorganisation and the need to cut borrowings from a level where they total 50 per cent of shareholders' funds, Royal Doulton will not pay a final dividend.

Price of common goods 'falling'

Mark Atkinson

ECONOMICS Correspondent

DEFLATION has arrived on the high streets, according to a new monthly survey published yesterday by the Bank of England's decision to cut interest rates.

While prices overall are continuing to rise, the most commonly bought goods are getting cheaper, the survey, published by the British Retail Consortium, shows. In the year to November, they were down by nearly 1 per cent.

The BRC's survey has a narrower scope than the retail prices index, published by the Office for National Statistics,

which is based on the prices of more than 600 goods and services. Indeed, the BRC monitors the price of 200 goods, divided into five categories: food and drink, household goods, furniture, clothing and personal goods. The BRC claims it is more representative of retailing than the RPI.

"TheONS figure is called the retail prices index, but it includes a lot of things that are not really about retailing such as the price of road tax to the price of aerobics classes," said BRC economist Pam Webber. "Our Shop Price Index will give an accurate picture of the inflation faced by shoppers on the most commonly bought items," it says.

The BRC is refusing to disclose the full list of 200 products which make up the index because it says retailers might use it to manipulate prices artificially.

It said, however, that they included Eavis sliced brown bread, an aluminium step ladder, a shower curtain, a man's blazer and cough syrup.

The BRC said the new index "shattered the perception that prices on the high street are too high and rising".

But City economists were cautious about accepting its findings. One questioned why goods prices, which are more responsive to the exchange rate than services prices, because many are traded inter-

nationally, were not lower given the sharp appreciation of sterling over the past two years.

Another said the new index would be of limited value to policymakers. It is already possible to construct a shop price index using components of the RPI, though it may be convenient to have the work done by someone else.

The Government's benchmark measure of inflation, the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments, has been in line with the Chancellor's target of 2.5 per cent for three months running.

Yesterday's rate cut was prompted by fears that it will fall below that target.

Knightsbridge Ab Fab store joins the retail chorus of gloom

Julia Finch

HARVEY Nichols has joined the high-street gloom. The London fashion store yesterday unveiled six-month profits static at £2.1 million, but warned that its full year result will be less than last year.

Sales in the last ten weeks are down 2.7 per cent on 1997, although they picked up in December. Chief executive Joseph Wan said: "Christmas is going to be a challenge. The whole nation is talking itself into a recession. Every day there is news of redundancies and consumers are reluctant to spend heavily."

The downturn will be Harvey Nichols' first profits reversal since it came to the stock market in 1991 but has not affected expansion plans for new stores in Edinburgh and Manchester.

Then it announced that potential partners about licensing new stores abroad in the Middle East.

It is planning two new restaurants, one to cash in on the expensive account lunch-trade in the City and Harvey Nichols also owns the trendy Oxo Tower Thameside restaurant in London, which turned in an operating profit of £424,000 in the last six months, up from £382,000 last year.

Three factors offer hope of survival as Britain heads towards recession

There is no escaping a period of pain, writes MARK ATKINSON, but there are some reasons to be cheerful

THE newly independent Bank of England has been much quicker on the mark in both raising and cutting interest rates in this cycle than the politicians were in the previous two, which should limit the severity of the slowdown. But there will be no escaping the harmful effects.

Job losses, so far limited to sections of manufacturing exposed to weak export markets, are likely to mount across the economy and feature high on the Government's agenda.

While a third successive monthly interest rate cut will no doubt give an immediate fillip to flagging consumer and business confidence, the 16-month lag between changes in monetary policy and their full effect on the real economy mean that the next six to eight months will still be painful. The die has already been cast by the damaging impact of the pound's strength on industry and the rapid deterioration in global economic prospects.

Some City economists are speculating that the UK economy may already be in recession, although the technical definition of two successive quarters of falling output will not be fulfilled until the spring at the earliest when the GDP figures for both the final three months of this year and the first three of next year will have been published.

Privately, ministers say they will be relieved if they get away with just two quarters of declining output. Their worry is that the downturn could be more prolonged, giving them a political headache in the run-up to the next election. But for now the outlook is reasonably optimistic.

While the momentum behind the slowdown and the big stock overhang in industry is likely to lead to a period of falling output, the economy is blessed with a number of advantages compared with the same point at the last downturn.

First, inflation is low, giving the Bank of England's monetary policy drafters ample scope to continue cutting interest rates aggressively in the months ahead without threatening the Government's inflation target.

David Walton, UK economist at US investment bank Goldman Sachs, expects the cost of borrowing, still twice as high as in the euro-zone, to

come down to around 5.5 per cent. That sounds low when you think that base rates went as high as 15 per cent during the last upswing but with underlying inflation, excluding mortgage interest payments at 2.5 per cent, it still means real, inflation-adjusted interest rates of 3 per cent. In Europe, real rates are already down to around 2 per cent.

Second, fiscal policy will be expansionary from April. After two years of unprecedented restraint over public spending, the brakes finally come off and this should complement the role of monetary policy in stimulating economic activity.

Public spending is set to

rise by 2.75 per cent per year in real terms over the next three years, according to Treasury figures. This includes an extra £40 billion for health and education.

Third, the excesses of the recent mini-boom have been nowhere near as bad as they were at the end of the 1980s. Then, consumers and businesses borrowed to the hilt, making the retrenchment that followed much deeper than it would otherwise have been. This time round, consumers and businesses have been much more cautious. It suggests they won't have to rein in their borrowings so far.

If all goes well, the UK economy could well be grow-

ing again by the middle of next year, as the Government's latest economic forecasts optimistically envisage.

A word of warning, however. While it must be remembered that the slowdown in growth has been actively engineered by the Government and Bank of England, which both tightened policy in the wake of Labour's election victory, it has been exacerbated by the global economic crisis.

The danger now is that it will go too far, much further than necessary to squeeze incipient inflation out of the system.

Over the international situation, the Government has little if any control.

How we compare

Current G7 interest rates

Japan	0.50
France	3.00
Germany	3.00
Italy	5.50
USA	5.50
Canada	5.75
UK	6.25



Dan Glaister on how a Lucian Freud painting fetched £2.8m

THE painter Lucian Freud became the most expensive contemporary artist sold at auction in Europe when his Naked Portrait With Reflection was bought for £2.8 million this week.

The painting, executed in 1980, had been expected to sell for between £750,000 and £1.2 million. It was included in a contemporary art sale at Sotheby's in London which realised just over £10 million.

The sale drew a great crowd of buyers. Freud's portrait of the artist Frank Auerbach sold for £314,500, the third highest price paid for one of his works. In May, the world record price for one of his paintings was set at Sotheby's in New York when *Lays Interior* after Watteau sold for £3.5 million. A Sotheby's spokesman said of this week's sale: "It is a very important work and this is a fantastic price. We expected it to sell for between £750,000 to £1.2 million, so it has more than doubled our expectations." The painting was bought by an anonymous bidder. There was an incredible response from collectors around the world.

The previous European record for a contemporary work was £2.5 million in April 1990 for a drawing by the French artist Jean Dubuffet.

Other highlights of the sale included Domplatz, Madland, by the German artist Gerhard Richter, which sold for £22 million. The painting, which was previously held in the boardroom of the electronics company Siemens, was

bought by the Fritzsche family, which owns the street club. The painting will hang in the lobby of the Hyatt Park Hotel in Chicago, now under construction.

The sale of the Freud confirms him, at least in art market terms, as the most important living British artist. This summer he had a show of recent paintings at the Tate, which made headlines because it included a small portrait of Jerry Hall.

Although the 75-year-old painter is renowned for his reclusiveness, he is thought not to be oblivious to the significance of the art market. After the world record sale in May, a close friend said: "He's very pleased. It's the first big picture of his he's had to give away. He had one badly but it seemed to have had a negative effect on other sales."

The sale undoubtedly had a positive effect, as the recent results from Sotheby's show.



Bathurst's Test
wicket tally
page 7

The Guardian

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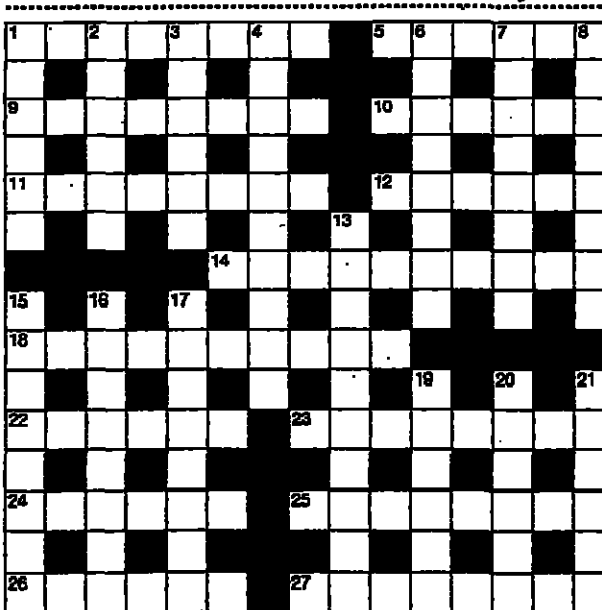
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SOTHEBYS



Set by Gordius



1 Printer's top money-making equipment (3)	tight... (10)
2 Settle on 12 $\sqrt{1}$ feet (5)	18 ...rameda for one who has ha one over the eight? (5,4)
3 Woman prepares meals with water (5,3)	22 Vehicle weight with packaging (5)
10 Place to lay one's head at small house for clergy (3)	23 Furniture that was sat on and broken by a lady? (5)
11 Resort gives soldiers nothing to sweat about (3)	24 Gold coin initially concealed as a plant (5)
12 This month includes little time very near the middle (5)	25 It may help to avoid a serious change (3)

26 important character of
Midwestern establishment (8)

27 Allen called, without disturbing
rest (8)

Down

1 Some agreement achieved, but
without little audience (8)

2 Subtle distinction of sister
divided by a state religion (6)

3 The first of three children needs
a nose pipe (8)

4 He wrote settings to be found in
a pastor (10)

5 Student taking a job to support
his studies (8)

7 At the pole and in the Arctic
Circle might be snow (8)

8 The Saint could be slow to act (8)

13 She catches a man by cunning
will, but there's no warmth in it
(5, 5)

16 Story of stake-holding: the City
act (8)

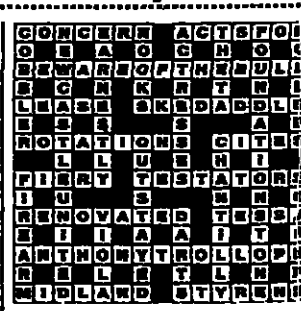
16 A boy overtaken by his senior in
the race (8)

17 Leading man said to upset
Philip's wife (8)

18 Worker turns up to join work
unit north of the border (8)

20 Strong line: if you take one for
nothing (6)

21 Denial of the Orange Order (5)

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Toleraton and Rade

WOMAN, 21
WOMAN, 21

SECRET

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Rugby Union British League hangs in a Celtic balance

Paul Rees and Robert Armstrong look at the proposed make-up of the divisions and the stance of the four home unions

THE prospect of a British League starting next season hinges on a meeting next week at which representatives of the four home unions will meet to discuss the proposed make-up of the divisions. The British League will be a new competition for the four home unions, which will be the only ones to play in it. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams.

The proposed groupings

East Division
Ten leading clubs from the Premiership will be in the East Division. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams. The league will be a Celtic balance, with the four home unions each having two teams.

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Vickery suffers new injury blow as comeback misfires

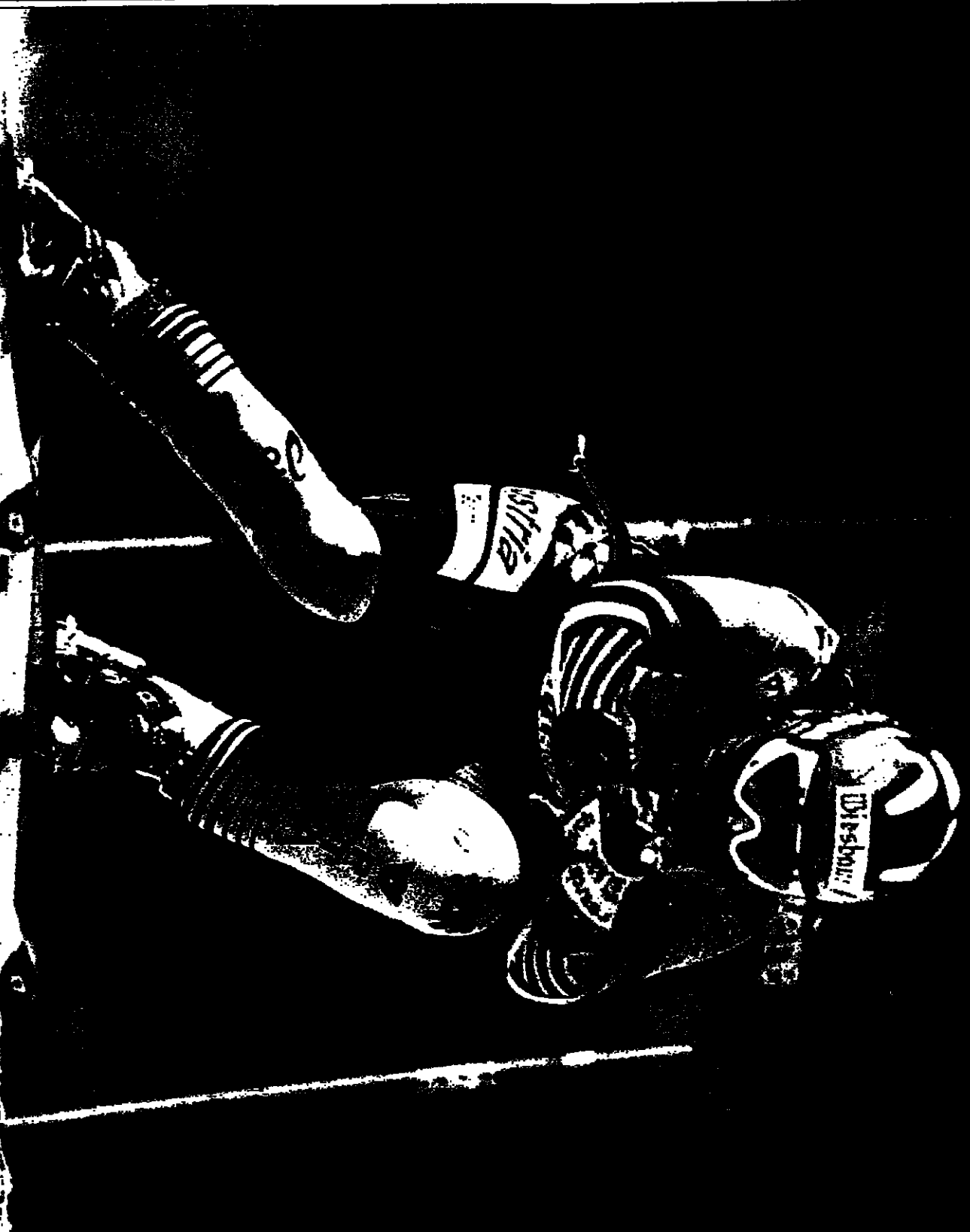
PHIL VICKERY, the Gloucester and England batsman, has suffered a new setback in his attempt to regain fitness after a neck injury. The 25-year-old left-handed batsman was seen at a physiotherapy session yesterday after missing the last three games of the county season. Gloucester coach John Pilmer said: "Phil is still in a bit of a problem there, but we have to get it sorted out as soon as possible."



Vickery... distraught

Sailing Cilmour meets his match in Spitbill as teenager takes early group lead

Bob Fisher in St Thomas
THE eight skippers taking part in the America's Cup Challenge, whose ultimate prize is a £1 million cash prize, were in action yesterday for the start of the Virgin Islands Match Race Grand Prix. The world's best skippers, including Cilmour and Spitbill, were in action yesterday for the start of the Virgin Islands Match Race Grand Prix. The world's best skippers, including Cilmour and Spitbill, were in action yesterday for the start of the Virgin Islands Match Race Grand Prix.



Cool customer... Australia's Alexander Keanewear sails to victory in the World Cup Super-G in Val d'Isere yesterday

Rugby League Wakefield strengthen squad despite financial uncertainty

Wakefield are currently looking to strengthen their squad for next season, despite financial uncertainty. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad.

Meissnitzer extends Cup lead with win in Super-G

AUSTRIA'S Alexander Meissnitzer has extended his lead in the women's Alpine World Cup yesterday with her third win of the season. The 25-year-old skier won the Super-G race in Val d'Isere, France, by a margin of 0.1 seconds. Meissnitzer has now won three of the four races she has entered this season.

Donald's defiance frustrates Lara

Second Test South Africa v West Indies

Cricket

AN unbroken partnership between Donald and Lara has frustrated the West Indies bowlers. The two batsmen have scored runs at a rapid pace, and their partnership has been a major factor in South Africa's success. The West Indies bowlers have struggled to break the partnership, and the batsmen have shown great defiance. The West Indies bowlers have struggled to break the partnership, and the batsmen have shown great defiance.

Scoreboard

South Africa: 228/4 (40 overs). West Indies: 145/6 (40 overs). The match is a close contest, with South Africa leading by 83 runs. The West Indies bowlers have struggled to break the partnership between Donald and Lara. The match is a close contest, with South Africa leading by 83 runs. The West Indies bowlers have struggled to break the partnership between Donald and Lara.

Second Test Pakistan v Zimbabwe Saqlain and Waqar do the job after Sohail reports in sick

Pakistan's bowling attack, led by Saqlain and Waqar, did the job after Sohail reported in sick. The two bowlers have taken wickets at a rapid pace, and their performance has been a major factor in Pakistan's success. The West Indies bowlers have struggled to break the partnership between Donald and Lara. The match is a close contest, with South Africa leading by 83 runs.

Marks to initiate planned revival at Somerset

David Peel
V/C MARKS, the cricket correspondent of the Observer, has been named as the new chairman of Somerset. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad. The club has been in a difficult financial position, but they are determined to improve their squad.

JUST OUT

The Boys

***½
Dir: Rowan Woods. With David Wenham, Toni Collette, Lynette Curran. Cert 18, 86 minutes.

Texas Chain Saw Massacre

Dir: Tobe Hooper. With Mervyn Burne, Alan Dargatzis, Paul A. Partain. Cert 18, 85 minutes.

The Parent Trap

**
Dir: Nancy Meyers. With Lindsay Lohan, Dennis Quaid, Neveasha Richardson. Cert PG, 127 minutes.

The Mask of Zorro

Dir: Martin Campbell. With Antonio Banderas, Anthony Hopkins, Catherine Zeta-Jones. Cert PG, 186 minutes.

Playing God

**
Dir: Andy Wilson. With David Duchovny, Timothy Hutton, Angelina Jolie. Cert 18, 94 minutes.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

1. Out Of Sight

George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez cut to the chase in Soderbergh's fast, funny, sexy film noir treasure.

2. It's A Wonderful Life

Jarvis Stewart plays the job-like American everyman in Frank Capra's perfectly prepared Yuletide treat.

3. My Name Is Joe

Peter Mullan's performance powers Loach's tough drama from Glasgow's DGS landscape.

4. The Boys

Rowan Woods' pungent Australian murder-story, revolving around the oppressive lounge and kitchen landscape of three slumming brothers.

5. Texas Chain Saw Massacre

Bone sculptures and psychotic human wrecks clutter about inside Tobe Hooper's unearthed horror landmark.

What's on, where it's on, when it's on.

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72-Guardian INTERACTIVE



Split decision... David Wenham as Brett and Toni Collette as Michelle in *The Boys*

Hate of the moment

Xan Brooks is shaken and disturbed by Rowan Woods' portrait of family life

Pink is for girls, blue is for boys.

The opening shot in Rowan Woods' gruelling family drama splits the frame in two. To the left lies the sky-blue hue of the Sprague family living-room and on the right the flushed tiles of the kitchen. Dividing these 'colours' down the middle runs a thick white wooden strip. This rigid dynamic is central to the tone and spirit of *The Boys*. Its tension is the tension between men and women, between chill stasis and the heat of action, as festering Brett Sprague (David Wenham) chugs broom from the bottle and ogles daytime telly while his murderous impulses bloom inside him. For most of *The Boys*, homicide has the upper hand. The threat of violence, though, runs through the film like 'loitering through Brighton Rock'.

In its native Australia, *The Boys* has already been hoisted up — alongside Ana Kokkinos's yet-to-be-released *Head On* — as evidence of a harsh new social-realist vein within their domestic industry. It opens on the morning of Brett's release from prison, having served 13 months for aggravated bodily harm. There he sits, farrel-faced on the kerb, fishing in the packet for his last tag while he waits to be ferried back to the "ret-brick shitter box" that the family calls home. Once there, the Spragues recorder themselves in what one imagines to be a timeless hierarchy. "We are all gods in our own world,"

remarks Brett at one point. His particular world is a drab suburban lay-out of lounge, kitchen, toilet and the bedroom where he keeps his sci-fi books. Younger siblings Glenn (John Polson) and Steve (Anthony Hayes) are his principalings, and mum (Lynette Curran) his cooling domestic help. Pink walls, blue walls. A forlorn chandelier and indecipherable crumbs in the plughole. The kettle is on, and trouble is brewing at the Sprague family pile.

The Boys is adapted from Gordon Graham's 1991 stage play, which was in turn apparently based on the true-life murder of a local nurse. At its bedrock, it remains a piece of filmed theatre. The action spans a long day's journey into night, the dialogue hats back and forth like a tennis match. You can almost picture the exploded partition-wall stage set that the players would have moved through. Still, Woods' world's hard (maybe too hard) to bring it to life.

Sometimes his camera is fixed and formal, sometimes ploughing hand-held into the action. He harvests sleek 35mm with pixelated streaks of processed video, leans heavily on slow-motion to convey fades to black to convey menace. Shots start out blurry. Then the focus knob is turned and the image turns clean and sharp, like a myopic rhinoceros in on its prey. Most effective is his time-frame: Woods syncs with his time-frame, weaves the narrative with a count-

terpoint rhythm. Instead of flash-backs, he gives us flash-forwards. The Boys' editing casts forward at intervals, reeling into the future in ever-widening arcs ("18 Hours Later", "Two Days Later", "Three Weeks Later"). These witty card-order segments play the role of prophetic nightmares within the place in the end, we never witness the crime that bones on the horizon; just its pressure-cooker build-up and ruinous aftermath. It is a marvellous technique: a subtle and restrained 'ironed-out' that none the less manages to make *The Boys* the most potent of family films. The tension of its brother-sister-broil plotline, the strain of an uneasy marriage of stage and screen. This is the film's strength and alibi.

Woods maps out the interior of the house with such intensity you feel you're living in it

already been compared — in heralding and intent — to Gary Oldman's *Nine By Nine*, yet this fatherly it. Gordon Graham's dialogue boasts none of the cracks of Oldman's *Defending Jacob*. More crucially, while David Wenham (who holed the role on stage) makes Brett a charismatic and implacable villain, the film's other characters stay two-dimensional.

The Boys' womenfolk, in particular, amount to little more than a

series of gestures. Glenn's girl-friend (Jeanette Cronin) is a sly, legging careerist, and Steve's (Anna Lee) a pathetic pillow he never want down the fire and suffer. Playing Brett's own long-suffering spouse, Toni Collette slaps down gun and rattles early jewelry. Meantime, Lynette Curran's Ma lounges in bed wearing a tan onesie presented to her by her absent father ("the only thing I ever gave me"). Blue, in other words, wins out over pink.

But for the most part *The Boys* relies on an understatement of the tension of its brother-sister-broil plotline, the strain of an uneasy marriage of stage and screen. This is the film's strength and alibi.

Because if most drama is about the audience and the audience, the Boys concerns itself with the time between such milestones; those incremental changes that set a chain of events in motion. But if such is to work, we need to feel every shift and nuance like it's a bomb going. And I never quite did.

Put it down to the pull between director and playwright, a strain

reflected in the film's logistical take

in its characters and scenery.

Woods maps out the interior of the

Sprague house with such intensity

you feel you're living in it. By con-

trast Graham's characters remain

flat; fitting sleeky and un-

filled through the rooms as though

in search of a proper back-story,

something to make them more than

short-hand symbols of family dys-

function.

Friday Review

Friday December 11 1998



The teenager who turned politics into art

By Simon Hattenstone

Photograph by Martin Godwin

Donal McCann is staring down death iv | Are there any real divas left in modern opera? vi | The latest film reviews viii

Meet Samira. She's a director from Iran, the new world capital of film. She's 18½

By Simon Hattenstone

Sandra Mathamath slips down the street, swinging her bag in the wind, cackles as a fartlet, I tell her how much I like her skirt

film, The Apple. "Why she slips

and stance at me, aggressively. I haven't a clue what to say. "See, people interview me, and expect me to answer things so profoundly even though I'm only 18 and a half. And I ask you, a simple question, and you can't answer it."

It's funny, I have a picture of Samira in my head. She is wearing a full-length black dress and veil, and looking as Iranian as a falcon. But the Samira berthing me is all jeans, V-necked top and teenage acne. After much hept burbling I did myself defending her flimsy et turgid length. Actually, there's no need. The Apple is as wonderful as it is strange.

In *Heaven*, it would probably be chided as a documentary possibly a docu-drama. But in fact it's neither a movie, it tells the story of a man -- married to a seemingly deceased, blind woman who has looked up his whereabouts for all their 12 years -- who has not only man. He believes it is the only way he can hook after his daughters. The film takes up the story after it has been reported on television -- Somali actresses with a crew and films the girls' rehabilitation in this outside world. Not only does the film tell, it also conveys it. We see the father presented with a newspaper calling for his imprisonment, we see the teenage girls marching over the course of it days. By the end of the film they are proudly revealing in their own freedom. In short, we witness a narrative though it could have just as easily turned into the cruelest of exploitation movies.

Sandra is the daughter of Mordechai Matimnahel, the celebrated filmmaker who edited and scripted *The Apple*. He has been a public figure in Iran for more than 20 years. Newspaper cuttings refer to him as an Islamist who spent some time in prison during the Shah's reign. When he was released he began to make films, and now his children are known as well in the family business. Sandra's fiancé, Hamid, has just made a short, *The Day My Aunt Was 17*. She is 50 years old.

we are sitting in a restaurant talking about getting old. Samir says it is an elderly since she made the film, that it is impossible to compute the experiences of a 17-year-old with that of a fully-fledged 18-and-a-half-year-old. Since then she has been around the world; she witnessed how people live in different societies, discovered that in daily patchwork of loneliness and fight, despair and joy is much alike.



Yelled opinions
... 'I'm not
interested in
politics, I'm an
artist,' says
Samira
Makhmalbaf
PHOTOGRAPH:
MARTIN GUDWIN

In Iran and Europe and America. She says that is what she likes about *The Apple*, the fact that it reflects the messiness of daily existence without trying to resolve it. "I don't judge in it, and I don't find any guilt in it, and I can just see different people's reasons for doing what they've done. I can go into a dark heart, a bad situation, and find a little brightness and openness, born in a war situation, culture and tradition. Even the most perverse behaviour. If you look in the *Quran* you will find a reason for the other to behave as they did. "You see in the book what is written, it says girls are like flowers—when they are young and they will die. It's so beautiful, it's so beautiful, it's so beautiful, it's so beautiful. And it is a bad thing that people and things are bad in such a poetic way because you believe

In its own way, The Apple could not be more political — a damning indictment of what happens when you take no notice. She just did die, but still life has continued. So there is a hard and dark situation, but why

shouldn't I still be able to find happiness? All I need is a small piece of light."

Santora talks in metaphors, colours, abstracts. She learned English at school, but never well enough to speak it. When she found out a few months ago she would be visiting Europe to promote the film, she spent a few weeks learning it properly. "I thought I'd like to say something for myself. This is a film about communication, so it's good if you can communicate a little bit." Without being able to communicate, she says, you cannot be a complete human being. "At the beginning of the film there two girls look like animals. Why? They are not rewarded. They just cry or communicate. It could be you or me in their situation." The problem is more severe for women, she says. "When it is a good situation because they work, I saw woman work than men. You can see it everywhere, but Iran is an extreme."

She says behaviour is rooted in

they must be right."

So his behaviour is rooted in this country's political "Nonconformist, she sneaks and I expect her to start clamping her foot. Santora's views, when he allows them to be felt, are fascinating, but marinated politics and the strange story. As for this year I interviewed him. Her film director Abbas Kiarostami. Likewise he believes in faith on culture and tradition, but hinted that it was difficult for him to make films. He started talking in agitated tones before asserting that he has been treated with great respect by the Iranian government.

Yet it is public knowledge that Iranian films are censored, and that the directors who get the best clips from Iran are those who have known how to live the most in the world. And, difficult though it is to admit, it censorship has probably helped, for much of the material we saw a similar phenomenon:

These films have been criticised in the West for being apologetic. And, of course, the intention is for them to appear apologetic to the Irishman government. We are unfairly making a documentary. They tell the censor: nothing to worry about. They present a sparse script (maybe 15 pages compared to a minimum of 80 in Hollywood) and about a dullish subject and the censor waves them on their way. Yet we are political. In the profoundest sense — in reflecting everyday lives, we learn about the women who, hidden behind their veils are banished from the social world, and the children left skinny and illiterate by poverty.

in its own way. The Apple could not be more political — a damning indictment of what happens when you take the Koran literally. Did Samira find it easy to make the film? She says she was lucky; she didn't need to censor herself, and that anyway under President

Kathleen mimes a casket up to her forehead. "That's the idea," she says. "Today she says, most censorship is not imposed by government but because of the ideas but by producers because of the money."

Does that mean she could criticize the government? "Why? I should ask these questions of me," she asks these questions of me, "shut up, screams. 'Why are you asking about this politics?' She is getting louder and louder. I'm not interested in and louder. I'm an *artist*, you ask, these political things — I don't have the experience to answer you about the experience in art and cinema. I'm just interested in art and cinema. I said there is kind of censor-

She says she never saw how funny Jim was, and she didn't see that many Irishmen once, because her father was an ascetic who wouldn't allow a video in the house.

At St. Ann's left school, just six months before she was due to graduate, she was bright, on her merit diploma. She was bright, on her

Changing faces.. the greatest drive of them all, Maria Callas (left), and possibly one of the finest-working new breeds, Cecilia Bartoli

As presenter Natalie Wheeler recognizes: "To be called a diva these days is a very loaded compliment. It has become a dirty word. People think of them as inflated personalities in fur coats who eat too much, behave badly, have tantrums and are really just large, screaming cavities. But these women are not airheads; they are the most formidable musicians."

— although a great and instantly recognisable voice is like a number-one requisite. It's a mark of personality, magic, glamour and a certain aura, a certainitas that comes out of them, certainly, on stage and often off stage as well. That implies that audiences

expect dives to behave like, well, the dives they are, with claws and a client and the willingness to use both to protect and perpetuate their own preeminence. All the better if, like Maria Galas, the greatest dive of them all, attitudes sometimes wins out over art. Even better if tragedy follows triumph as in the ignominious *Ilany* or *Grand-dame* dives who continue to stir long after the votes have faded.

Or, indeed, if fame is occasionally tempered with farce, as in the case of one distraught diva who threw herself into a prop cluster rather than face again the final draining scene of Struss's Salome.

The lesson there is obvious to whelp. "Being a diva is a gift, but it is also a terrible responsibility. You can have it and decide not to be it, that's easy. But the foothills to

this terrible plateau are littered with singers who have fallen off because they haven't been good enough. If you can't hack it vocally, mentally and emotionally, don't even think about attempting it."

With the days of relentless personal sacrifice largely past, the romantic concept of the diva divine has lost a crucial element. Today's divas see themselves as jobbing singers who either refuse the po-

sored chaises altogether — hard to imagine Datta Upshaw or Ann Soble von Otter gristily scheming Melvyn Bragg for the sake of career or status — or slip from it with assiduous care. The soprano Barbara Bonney takes a Lewis-headed view of her own divadness: "It has to do with a specifically American morally and vocally... with being respectable our colleagues and trying to be like them."

ing not to let other people down." For Andrew Bennett, Chair of the Opera and Music Theatre Forum and administrator of the City of Birmingham Young Opera company, Bouney's attitude is to be welcomed. "Opera is perfectly capable of regenerating itself without recourse to the inflated anachronism of the diva. To presume it is in any way fundamental component of

opera in the future would be useful, because the useful function of dials in opera is to see it as a dead form."

the CBTO, now in its 12th year (not mean achievement for a middle-scale touring opera company), has refused divandom from its

Encouragingly, at the vanguard of these so-called "diva" movies are some of the inside arts: Angela Throop's *And the Winner Is*, and Cecelia Bartoll, strong person-ality and a little off-kilter, in *My Darling Clementine*. Other companies try to outdo her by their singers as pseudo-divas, but we all know that half a diva isn't as divine as all. Working in a diva-ish way would be simply anathema to us.

priority is contradicted. Encouraging crossing swords with conductor and directors when their own sense of musical fidelity and joy-fulness, too, is their willingness to risk the enticements of get-rich-quick promoters, and their readiness to rein in the wildest claims of their own publicists. They have learned, Matheopoulos observes approvingly, from the "vocal copy-throw" mistakes of their immediate predecessors.

If, adds Viven, is an old-fashioned idea, it's because it has been so often used.

What neither Matheopoulos's book nor Whelan's extremely entertaining radio series quite manages to reconcile — despite the supposedly overpopulated roll-call of two dozen singers — is the stark contrastiness of the whole idea of *dividom*. Opera, with its inherent tendency to excess, certainly

larger-than-life personalities. To rise to the challenge incurs a bruising toll. For Regine Crepin, subject of Whelan's first program, being a dive means "work plus work plus work and, again, work," an exhausting analysis shared by many of the contributors. The rewards, of course, are proportionate. Along with the

boost to bank balance and ego comes the freedom to fully realize your talent and to speak one's mind with impunity, as Christa Tudwig once did in rehearsal for *Die Walküre* to her hapless director: "Herr Gruber, everything you tell me is shit, but I'm doing what I say because I'm well paid."

Girl power has seldom been so plithily or so powerfully expressed.

Helen Matheropoulos's Drive: The

New Generation is published by Little, Brown (£16.99). Natalie Whelan's DNA series runs on Radio 3, 21-25 December.



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Meet Samira. She's a director from Iran, the new world capital of film. She's 18 1/2

VI | Music

The Guardian Friday December 11 1998

III

Goodness Gracious me

BRITISH MUSIC AWARDS 1998

WINNER: Sade

25. ALBUM OF THE YEAR: Sade, Lovers Rock

26. BEST NEW ARTIST: Sade

27. BEST POP ALBUM: Sade, Lovers Rock

28. BEST R&B ALBUM: Sade, Lovers Rock

29. BEST ROCK ALBUM: Sade, Lovers Rock

30. BEST CLASSICAL ALBUM: Sade, Lovers Rock

31. BEST FILM SCORE: Sade, Lovers Rock

32. BEST TV MUSIC: Sade, Lovers Rock

33. BEST VIDEO: Sade, Lovers Rock

34. BEST LIVE PERFORMANCE: Sade, Lovers Rock

35. BEST MUSIC VIDEO: Sade, Lovers Rock



Divas for pearls

They used to throw tantrums, drink like fish and overeat — oh, and sing like goddesses. But are there any real divas left in modern opera? Michael Quinn investigates

Then, opera's cognoscenti would mourn the great performances they hadn't seen. Now the rank and file mourn the performances they have. And yet some say we are in a golden age of divas and have seldom had it so good. If the names of Bartoli, Gheorghiu, Fleming, Graves and Kelessidi don't trip off your tongue, you're not alone. When Helena Mathopoulos wrote her first collection of interviews with divas in 1991 (*Divas: Great Sopranos And Mezzos Discuss Their Art, Goddard*) she complained in it about the dearth of suitable candidates. Which will no doubt please her interviewees, their agents and lawyers in equal measure. But as if to confirm Mathopoulos's optimism, along comes a new series of diva interviews on Radio 3, albeit with a less cosmopolitan sensibility approach to the subject. Though the focus is backwards rather than forwards — only one of its four programmes features a new-generation diva, the suitably exotic Angela Gheorghiu — and the tone a little more cautious, it too seeks to celebrate a creature long syn-

'Companies talk up their singers, but half a diva ain't no diva at all'

Andrew Bennett

The Spice Girls of the opera world. Sexy, sassy, successful. And they're everywhere. Like their pop counterparts, opera's leading ladies boast big personalities, big bank balances and, more often than not, huge egos. No longer confined to the opera house, they drape themselves over the covers of glossy lifestyle magazines and across the sofas and swivel chairs of television chat shows with numbing regularity. (One securely established American diva is currently suing her record company for failing to get her enough chat-show invites, thereby she claims, damaging her career.) In fact, so numerous and ubiquitous are they, that if a diva were to turn up on your doorstep tonight as a cut-above-the-average sing-a-gran, you'd hardly bother to answer the doorbell.

It wasn't always thus. There was a time when the diva was an albatross of Olympian stature with a rarely altogether in keeping with the dedication that the name — Latin for "Goddess" — implies

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Capturing real life... Masoumeh and Zahra Nedari, the wild girls of The Apple

the smartest in her class, when she turned round to her father and said she'd had enough, and now she wanted to make movies. "Because we were girls we were a second class of human being... being a director, you need to be a first class of human being." Was she as beligerent at school as she is now? She turns to her translator, they chat away at length and she giggles. "Woooooowowow, I was fine. I was a good student."

Her father and the teachers tried to persuade her to stay to no avail. "Sometimes I do things that are a little bit unusual, but they don't damage anybody. If I decide not to go to school and don't bother anybody, what's wrong?" Samira told her father that if he took five minutes of his time to tell her about film-making she wouldn't bother him again. "I said I will leave you for six months and not come back, and he just laughed at me. But little by little he started talking to me about cinema, more than five minutes, maybe one hour, two hours, three hours. And then some of my friends wanted to know about art, so they came to these sessions and then some of my father's friends who were artists came, and we had discussions. Discussions, is that right? So after a few times it was about painting and books and film."

Kiarostami told me he thought cinema was respected more in Iran than in many countries, that both audience and directors were more interested in finding a truth than evading it with escapism. Samira gives me one of her sceptical looks. I sense she wants to tell me that's

rubbish, but is holding back. Eventually, she answers with unusual tact. "He's a wonderful director... everything that anyone says is true... but still there are people who go for entertainment. People everywhere are the same. How can Iran be quite different?"

And having said her dues to Kiarostami she concentrates on kicking my opinion into touch. She says that of the 70 films a year made in Iran, most are Hollywood-like in their banality. "Very simple, very ignorant. OK, there may not be sex or violence like in America, but it would be an adventure. There would be a simple good guy, a simple bad guy. They find no interest in the characters, just judge."

Before I met Samira I presumed that her father must have been the creative force behind *The Apple*. And certainly he had a considerable role, but when you hear her speak it becomes apparent that the film is very much her vision. Yet, however brilliant it is, I still feel uneasy about *The Apple*.

How is the film scripted? "The family use their own words, I'm never dictate to them. I know what the reactions to certain things would be, I knew if I gave the father the newspaper he would be angry when I said he is guilty."

She explains that the script isn't a script as such — it is the events created around the people.

Is there a danger in playing God like this? "OK, so what am I to do, I'm to leave them in the house? I think the film made them more socialised. You see in 11 days how their lives have been changed. If they'd stayed at home for 11 days

their lives would not have changed so much." It's impossible to disagree with her. She says she is still in touch with the family and the two girls have now settled into school.

Samira leaves to have her photograph taken and I ask the translator for why she is so defensive about politics. He asks me if I know about her father. "Makmalbaf was a religious fanatic, a fundamentalist," he says. When Makmalbaf was about 20 years old he was an Islamic revolutionary who shot a policeman in an attempt to disarm him. Makmalbaf was on death row, had his sentence commuted to 26 years, and was eventually released when the Shah's regime was brought down. The translator asks me if I've seen Makmalbaf's film, *A Moment Of Innocence*, in which he recaptures this time and turns it into a movie — this, he says, is the director's sense. Makmalbaf plays himself, as does the policeman he stabbed. Just as the family in *The Apple* play themselves, it is a lyrical, humane film. At the end, when the young Makmalbaf goes to re-enact the stabbing, he finds this time he cannot do it, he wants a different means of changing the world.

When Makmalbaf emerged from prison he became a propagandist film-maker for Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolution. Then he began to read the philosophers and gradually turned into a poet of the cinema rather than an austere dogmatist. Some say he is no longer even an Islamist. No wonder Samira is touchy about

politics.

Does the translator know how her mother died? He says she turned to death in the house, and that it was probably an accident there was inevitably much conjecture in Iran.

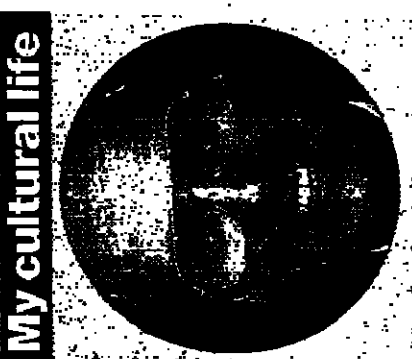
Samira returns and stares hard — perhaps she heard us talking about her mother. I ask her whether she is making another film? She says she's thinking about it, but she's not telling me what it's about, nah-nah-nah-nah-na, and she giggles.

Would she ever live outside Iran? "No, never." Would she make a film outside Iran? "I don't think so because I know my culture." But then again, she says, when she went to the US she was amazed by the similarity in the details of their lives.

I tell her how surprised I am that Iranian films are so secular. She asks what secular means before laying into it. What's the point of more buildings when we should be encouraging young writers? In an ideal world I would like to move radio. I'm a great fan of Radio 4. The standard is very high, with excellent news in the morning. The comedy is particularly good but I am torn when there's a Test match on. One thing I make time for on tour is reading. I have very Catholic tastes but right now I'm re-reading a brilliant, timeless piece, *Cider With Rosie*. Stephen Fry's *Liar* was an enjoyable read and I like Ben Elton's work.

Karim Parvizi is performing in the narrative on the New Faculty House Show, currently on tour.

Interview by Caroline Eglen



My cultural life

Nicholas Parsons

Find it such a challenge to fit everything in, especially now while I'm on tour. I tend to opt for the theatre and cinema instead of watching TV, which is becoming very predictable going for quantity rather than quality. When I'm travelling I don't get the chance to see theatre but I always check out the chorine. I read all the reviews and make a little note to myself to try and watch up. I love to see a film for what it's worth, for what it's set out to do.

I have to see film on the big screen; video is not the same thing at all. *Saving Private Ryan* is one to watch again. As it gets, it has the style and sophisticated performances like Casablanca and all those great films of the past which is now very up to the minute. Elizabeth took great license with *Shogun*... I know that was very well... but you can allow it to be good drama. I'm looking to see *Ami*.

There was a period when the film industry was churning out all the same stuff, then along came the brilliant *T.A. Confessions*. I enjoy *Crumb*, so seven years in Tibet was very exciting story and very interesting taking you into an area that was forbidden for so long.

As for theatre, I go for anything that sounds different and interesting, and not always for academic pleasure. I'm a great admirer of Pinter, who's very off the wall, and Peter Shaffer. I'll go to see anything by David Hare, especially with Judi Dench. Yvonne Raza's *Art* was a superb piece of writing and great theatre. Musicals go on forever so you can always catch them, but you tend to come off early.

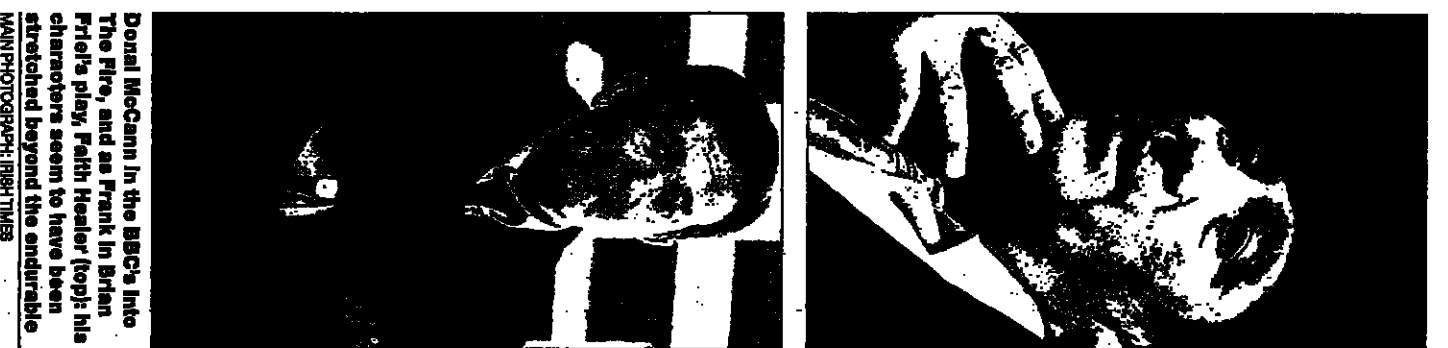
Theatre is wonderful in this country but the political parties are not putting enough funding into it. What's the point of more buildings when we should be encouraging young writers? In an ideal world I would like to move radio. I'm a great fan of Radio 4. The standard is very high, with excellent news in the morning. The comedy is particularly good but I am torn when there's a Test match on. One thing I make time for on tour is reading. I have very Catholic tastes but right now I'm re-reading a brilliant, timeless piece, *Cider With Rosie*. Stephen Fry's *Liar* was an enjoyable read and I like Ben Elton's work.

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Why?

He looks about on the couch and hums and haws, and lights another cigarette. There is a suggestion that everyone would like to be a fully-fledged actor. That doing well-paid rubbish is what we all aspire to. It's ludicrous. I'm not going to live a soap box to denounce the whole thing, but this desire to be known, I just don't understand it. I couldn't take it seriously."

Film, he mutinates with typical thin intelligence, is a director's medium. "The stage is the only place really where it comes down to it for actors and writers. Look back over his career — 'I have no career,' he insists. 'I have a life' — and a pattern emerges. Great highs followed by some horrific personal disaster or another, then silence, then another triumph. It's not hard to see why they call him Lazarus himself — but never his work."

So why did you do it, Donal? Why didn't you take the money and run instead of putting yourself through the wringer? Was it your politics or something deeper? "Neither," he said, suddenly looking 1,000 years old. "It's like this. You have a gift and you have to stand by it. It is sacred, this granite integrity that McCann, and everyone who has worked with him, has been ground. He walked out of Arns and The Man at the Abbey in the early eighties and didn't do a play again for four years. 'Come I was having a bad time, the drink and what have you,' he tells me, "and during that time I could not pass a theatre without retching." For a time during June, one of his finest hours, he had to be checked out of a mental hospital for each performance after scrapping trying to save a girl who had threatened suicide."

Despite his success, McCann has led a hand-to-mouth existence. He is an ascetic who lives alone and he doesn't own a car or house.

Are you as hard on others as you are on yourself, I ask. "I am not a bully. If that is what you are saying, writers and actors don't get many chances. I was thinking," he said slowly, "just before you came, about all the great writers that were missed in this town. How many got poor productions way back. I often think, what if we missed someone terrible?"

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Consequence is big in the McCann clan. His father, a socialist in all but name, and a writer of Dublin kitchen comedies, was also twice mayor of the city and was responsible for clearing many of the city's slums, then the worst in Europe. From him he inherited his principles and his drive.

I mention The Dead, which Flannery O'Connor said was "the finest novel made when he was dying." The conversation has taken an ominous turn, he deepens, then drops

a couple of about Dublin dialect puns — "McCann himself, by the way, is a beautifully playful writer — before he turns the conversation to cancer. There's that lightening similarity again."

"The heavy said goodbye. But God is good. I'm still here talking to you. It's been a year and sometimes I don't know whether it is a gift or an affliction. There have been times, of course, when you think it's a curse. I never thought being an alcoholic, you know, with the cold turkey and that, would stand me in such good stead."

The next day he was going back into hospital for another "procedure". He is worried, but deeply, ately hoping it won't stop him going to New York to see "my friend", who he met on the set of The Neptunes, his new film, a real little whimsical crowd-pleaser to which he gives a comical twist. "She is a very special lady indeed," he says, and the boy in him, the one so many women have wanted to catch. The 2.30 at Kempton Park walk for no man.

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as the song says — thinking what will be will be. The talk about Flannery O'Connor, the actor-producer of The Neptunes, who bowed to McCann for top billing — "my agent didn't draw blood" — and Eugene Brady, the five-time director with a descriptively rare touch. We're interrupted by a fan, and he stands up to shake his hand. It is only then that I notice how gangly and youthful he looks. The longer I spent with him the more I realised how at peace with himself he is. This, you suspect, is something new. "Yes, maybe I am. Maybe that is the gift of it."

His clothes are that bit too big for him now — "there are compensations to not drinking" — and I notice a cord around his neck. He makes no secret of his strong faith, and I assume it's a scriptural, a Catholic relic. He's faked me again. It's a green stone ring from Fiji. Ah, a two-way bet.

"She gave it to me. I wear it all the time."

I have a hunch and he's not a rose so many women have wanted to catch. The 2.30 at Kempton Park walk for no man.

Staring down death

Donal McCann, widely regarded as the greatest Irish actor of our age, has put a lifetime's tumult into his work. In a rare interview, he tells **Fiachra Gibbons** why the cancer that might have killed him has given him a new take on life

My God, I would never have recognised you! It was out before I'd realised what I'd said. Donal McCann looked pained. I felt a total twist. The man shaking my hand was so much thinner than the one I had watched on film the night before.

I had been scanning the lobby of a Dublin hotel for that man when he grabbed my arm. I knew he hadn't been well — the big G, they said, the pictures, it wasn't quite like seeing a ghost, but it was a shock. And now I was huddling like a fool.

There are stories about McCann. Stories that would make your hair stand on end and I had been warned. Everything I'd been told — the drinking, the depression, the sharpness of tongue — wait, spinning through my mind. All seemed at odds with the almost serene man sitting in front of me. There was a lightness about him, too, as if some great weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

"Sit down, Sit down, son," he said, tossing his rolled-up copy of the Evening Post on to the sofa. He has a piece of advice for me. Oh dear, if you're ever in a tight spot, he says, you can always rely on Jesus or Jerry Pinnau.

We laugh, but he's only half joking. McCann, like to mark his life

not by plays or films but by wins on the horses. Like a lot of extraordinary people, he goes to great pains to prove how ordinary he is.

What followed wasn't quite an interview, more a conversation. The sort you have when you're stuck with someone in a railway station waiting for a train you secretly hope won't come. Complex isn't the half of it. Luckily McCann doesn't wear a watch. He sits and talks like he has all the time in the world.

"I wish you luck," a friend of his told me. "Getting a handle on Donal is like moving smoke with a pitchfork. McCann has spent his life in an unequal struggle with his talent. You've probably caught him playing one of a long line of tortured souls on screen. You might even have seen John Healey's last film, The Dead, and been like many, haunted by him. But that's only a small part of the story. On stage he sears into the memory as Frank Hardy in Priel's Faithfulness about him, too, as if some great weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

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bomb in others." Another said, "You feel his characters have been stretched beyond the endurable."

Yet, push a little harder, and words like cruel, even monstrous, crop up, often in the same sentence as "selfless" and "generous beyond sense". Michael Colclough of Dublin's Gate Theatre, for whom he has done some of his best work, is reluctant to discuss the man. "All I will say is that there is a dichotomy. He is both a devil and a saint, and he has suffered for it. But that's also where he gets his great power."

"Donal's genius is that he always moves the writer right across the director right and back at the audience right just before being there. That," says Colclough, "is why he is the greatest actor we've ever had."

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"How did you learn to do that?" he asked. "By watching you," he replied.

"Who is this guy?" asked Newsweek when he took The Shawshank Redemption to New York two years ago, and to New York two years ago, as "selfless" and "generous beyond sense". Michael Colclough of Dublin's Gate Theatre, for whom he has done some of his best work, is reluctant to discuss the man. "All I will say is that there is a dichotomy. He is both a devil and a saint, and he has suffered for it. But that's also where he gets his great power."

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It was waiting for Godot, when he played Estragon opposite Peter O'Toole in 1966 that did it. The Sun, O'Toole, and just about everyone else, predicted great things. Hollywood beckoned. So did Rome, Paris and the best film-makers in London. But McCann, stubborn bugger, stayed put. "I remember, very early on, being flown to Rome for a film with a great Polish director. I spent a week in this hotel where the tea, the script was great but, I don't

know, you pick a fight with the director?"

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